

# AN UPDATE ON MAIL THEFT AND CRIME

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JULY 23, 2025  
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*Written opening statements and bios are available on the U.S. House of Representatives Document Repository at: docs.house.gov.*

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- \* Statement for the Record, National Association of Postal Supervisors; submitted by Rep. Sessions.

*The documents listed above are available at: docs.house.gov.*

## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- \* Questions for the Record: Mr. Albergo; submitted by Rep. Foxx.
- \* Questions for the Record: Mr. Albergo; submitted by Rep. Mfume.
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*These documents were submitted after the hearing, and may be available upon request.*



## AN UPDATE ON MAIL THEFT AND CRIME

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2025

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
*Washington, D.C.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:06 p.m., in room HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Pete Sessions [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Sessions, Foxx, Palmer, Burchett, Mfume, Norton, Frost, and Randall.

Mr. SESSIONS. Subcommittee on Government Operations will come to order.

I would like to welcome everyone. Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Before we go too far, we are being visited today by an honorable, distinguished veteran of the United States military. And as I was describing to a fellow—a Marine, a gentleman who served our country as a Marine, I said, well, this guy, General Al Zapanta, retired two-star Special Forces, United States Army. And he said, yeah, the Army is kind of like the Armed Services.

So, General Zapanta, if you would please stand up and be recognized for your service. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Mr. SESSIONS. In fairness, if there are others who have served our United States military, if you would please take time and stand up and let us honor you also.

That would be the great Bill Womack, United States Marine Corps.

[Applause.]

### OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN PETE SESSIONS REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS

Mr. SESSIONS. Today's hearing regards the Postal Service's response to mail theft and crime. I just took a few minutes and met again our guests who are here today to provide us leading-edge ideas about exactly that issue.

The Postal Service is charged with delivering mail to every address in our Nation six days a week. Within that system, there are

numerous points where bad actors attempt to steal mail and harm people who work for the United States Postal Service and others.

It is common for myself and other Members of Congress to hear about mail theft from our constituents. In fact, we hear things most days, one way or another, about frustrations as it is related to mail security. The Postal Inspection Service, the Postal Service law enforcement arm is responding by creating a strategy called Project Safe Delivery to combat mail theft.

While progress has been made, Congress has certainly been informed that criminals have increasingly begun to target letter carriers also. There has been an 845 percent increase in letter carrier robberies from 2019 to 2023. As such, this Subcommittee on Government Operations is a part of trying to make sure we are staying on top of this issue and to advise our colleagues.

Congress needs to ensure that the Postal Service is responding to these threats and keeping not just letter carriers safe, but the United States—entire United States postal system. Mail theft creates distrust in the system, and we need to make sure that more people have not just confidence, but that fewer people are taken advantage of.

For this reason, addressing mail theft and related crime is a key to supporting the United States Postal Service in its goal to become self-sufficient. I look forward to a robust discussion.

We believed, and Mr. Mfume believed, that this was timely some months ago. We have chosen today, well before the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, but certainly in time to make sure that we hear from each of you about this, and I am delighted that you are here today.

One thing that you will learn today that you may not know, and that is the Government Operations Subcommittee and government workforce works on a bipartisan basis. We work carefully, Mr. Mfume, myself, and the gentleman who sits to my right today, Mr. Frost, is a prime example of a person who has come to this Subcommittee with the idea we are going to get away from fight and go to fix.

So, I am delighted today to welcome the distinguished gentleman from Florida, Mr. Frost, for an opening statement. The gentleman is recognized.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF MAXWELL FROST  
REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA**

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you so much to our witnesses for being here today.

Appreciate this hearing on one of the most pressing challenges facing the Postal Service, the recent surge of crimes committed against the United States mail system and postal employees. Postal crimes threaten the safety of our letter carriers and disrupt the lives of millions of Americans who depend on reliable and secure mail delivery.

The data we will hear today paints a troubling picture. Between fiscal years 2019 and 2023, serious crimes against the postal employees nearly doubled nationwide. Attacks on letter carriers increased by more than sevenfold during the same period.

In the Fiscal Year 2024 alone, the United States Postal Service received more than 268,000 complaints; 100,000 complaints of mail and volume of receptacle theft, which is roughly the same level of complaints received in the Fiscal Year 2020.

Meanwhile, postal inspectors opened over 1,100 cases, representing just half of one percent of reported incidents. I commend the power of the postal inspectors who achieved an 89 percent clearance rate in the Fiscal Year 2024 for mail theft arrests versus convictions, but the human costs of these crimes cannot be captured by the data alone.

Our letter carriers are dedicated public servants who ensure Americans receive critical information, documents, ballots, medication, and personal letters. And yet, they are the ones being targeted, assaulted, and robbed at high rates.

The theft of universal arrow keys that letter carriers use to unlock mailboxes in bulk have surged from over 1,300 reports in 2020 to more than 3,400 reports in 2024. In October 2024, a letter carrier based in Baltimore was robbed at knife point on their route so the thief could steal a package. These acts are abhorrent.

Mail fraud is another disturbingly, yet sadly prevalent, part of postal-related crimes. In 2023, check fraud schemes involving the Postal Service resulted in an estimate \$688 million in losses.

In March 2025, a U.S. district judge sentenced the man in Baltimore for exploiting the Postal Service to engage in elder fraud schemes of more than \$700,000. These crimes destroy lives.

Unfortunately, independent oversight bodies have found gaps in the Postal Service response to this crime. The Postal Service is working to implement their recommendations, but ongoing independent, nonpartisan oversight is critical to ensure continued transparency and accountability.

That is why two years into the launch of Project Safe Delivery, our Ranking Member, Mr. Mfume, led a letter to request that the GAO conduct a review of implementation and results of the initiative. I look forward to reading those findings.

The Postal Service has a constitutional mandate and is the life-line of millions of Americans, particularly in rural communities and hard-to-reach areas. When thieves target our mail system, they attack the foundation Americans—American commerce and communication.

It is crucial that the Postal Service has the resources, authority, and strategic direction needed to protect letter carriers, secure the mail, and restore public's trust in the Postal Service. Postal employees deserve a workplace where they can deliver the mail without fear, and the American people deserve a postal system that they can trust.

I hope this hearing serves as an important step toward achieving that goal, but we need everyone on board to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Frost, thank you very much. I appreciate not just your comments, but your highlighting, once again, the importance of today's hearing.

I am pleased to welcome our witnesses for today.

Brendan Donahue is Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Julius Rothstein is Deputy Inspector General at the U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General.

Brian Renfroe is the president of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Frank Albergo is the president of the Postal Police Officers Association.

And then we have Chief Anthony Holloway, Chief of Police of St. Petersburg, Florida Police Department.

I am delighted that each of you are here today, and while I had an opportunity to come down and welcome you, I think that the role that you are going to play today will be instrumental to every single Member of Congress.

At this time, I would like to have each of our witnesses stand for the administration of oath to witness. Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[Chorus of ayes.]

Mr. SESSIONS. Let the record reflect that the witnesses have all answered in the affirmative and we would like to thank you very much, and please take your seat.

We appreciate your time, your professionalism, and your conduct today to lead this Subcommittee toward better answers, not just to understand the facts of the case that we have talked about, but also your professional witness testimony today.

Please know that while we ask that you limit your oral statements to 5 minutes, I would like for you to make sure you make your point. I do not want you to stop in the middle of a sentence. I want you to finish what you are trying to do.

Likewise, each of the Members here will afford you that same privilege as they are talking with you. We want to make sure that you have come here for a reason, and that we understand what that is.

As a reminder, you will notice that in front of you, there is a button on the microphone in front of you. Please do, at the time you are asked or recognized, that you push that button so that the Members can hear you.

And when you begin to speak, you will see a green light, and then after 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow and then the red light comes on. At that I ask that you prepare yourself to finish your feedback to us.

I now recognize the distinguished gentleman, Mr. Donahue, for his opening statement, and welcome.

**STATEMENT OF BRENDAN DONAHUE, INSPECTOR IN CHARGE  
UNITED STATES POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE**

Mr. DONAHUE. Good afternoon, Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate your interest in understanding the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's role in securing our Nation's mail and protecting Postal Service employees from harm.

My name is Brendan Donahue, and I am an Inspector in Charge for the Postal Inspection Service, the law enforcement, crime prevention, and security arm of the United States Postal Service.

In my role, I provide executive leadership for domestic, global, and national security. I proudly served as a postal inspector and a postal employee since 2012, and I was previously a uniformed police officer in Massachusetts.

I want to specifically talk about mail theft and letter carrier robberies with you today, and the steps that we have taken to mitigate those crimes. Beginning around 2020 and continuing to around 2023, the Postal Service experienced a significant increase in theft from mail receptacles, primarily driven by financial crimes like check fraud.

The significant rise in mail theft and associated financial crimes has been driven by highly organized criminal groups who shifted their focus from high-risk, high-reward crimes to the perpetration of low-risk, high-reward financial crimes.

Although there is no single cause for the shift, it is likely due in part, first, to mass pandemic relief fraud perpetrated during the COVID-19 pandemic; second, to the proliferation of cyber-enabled techniques that facilitate the perpetration of financial crime; and third, a lax prosecutorial and sentencing climate for property and financial crimes in some U.S. jurisdictions.

Prior to 2020, mail theft from mail receptacles, such as blue collection boxes, was primarily perpetrated through forced entry or using fishing devices. We countered that with physical security enhancements to mail receptacles.

During the same period these physical security enhancements were implemented, and corresponding with a significant rise in mail theft, the Postal Service began to experience a marked increase in letter carrier robberies. The same organized criminal groups perpetrating mail theft-related financial crimes have also conducted a vast majority of these robberies for postal keys carried by letter carriers.

To counter these attacks against our postal employees and to protect our delivery network, we launched Project Safe Delivery, which includes our national strategy to combat mail theft and letter carrier robberies.

Since Project Safe Delivery was launched on May 12, 2023, and in fulfillment of our strategy, we have installed more than 23,000 high-security blue collection boxes nationwide, with an additional 16,000 blue collection and relay boxes to be installed shortly.

Replaced more than 42,000 antiquated hour locks with electronic locks, with an additional 55,000 to be installed shortly.

Made more than 419 arrests for letter carrier robberies.

Made more than 2,700 arrests for mail theft-related crimes.

Conducted 16 enforcement surge operations in ten cities, leading to 68 arrests with more than 1,000 investigative actions.

Hired ten Special Assistant United States Attorneys to prosecute letter carrier robberies, mail theft, and other postal crimes.

Partnered with local and state law enforcement agencies, such as the St. Petersburg, Florida Police Department, who is here today, by adding more than 29 state and local law enforcement task force officers to specifically investigate mail theft-related financial crimes

and letter carrier robberies, adding to the more than 140 task force officers we already have.

Coordinated with the financial crimes enforcement network to identify and analyze financial intelligence, associated mail theft-related check fraud.

Significantly raised reward amounts for information leading to the arrest and conviction for postal crimes, including mail theft with a reward of up to \$100,000, and postal robberies with a reward up to \$150,000.

Partnered with American Bankers Association and Independent Community Bankers of America to produce and distribute check fraud prevention material.

Raised awareness among postal employees through all employee standup talks and pay stub inserts.

These are just some of the steps we have taken over the past two years, and I can report today that we have seen significant progress in mitigating these issues. Last fiscal year, we saw a 27 percent decrease in letter carrier robberies. And this fiscal year we are on track to see a 32 percent decrease in letter carrier robberies.

We have also seen a decrease in measures in mail theft, with a 20 percent decrease in mail theft complaints last fiscal year, and we are on track to see a four percent decrease in mail theft complaints this fiscal year. This progress is notable, but we acknowledge that we still have more work to do.

There are no amount of attacks on our employees and no amount of mail theft that will ever be acceptable to us. We also continue to face challenges, such as with prosecution, sentencing, and investigative tools where Congress' help would be beneficial.

The Postal Inspection Service is committed to protecting all postal employees, securing the mail, and defending the Postal Service's infrastructure from criminal attack. We have answered this call for 250 years, and intend to continue our proud tradition of service. We are committed to our mission and to continually making significant investments of time, capital, personnel, and resources to protect all employees and the mail.

Thank you, Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Donahue, thank you very much.

Mr. Rothstein, before we come to you, I have a request, which I am going to grant, pending Mr. Frost's agreeing.

That is that one of our young Members, the Chairman of the Rules Committee, has asked that she be allowed to go first in asking questions right now because she has a bunch of votes at her Ed and Workforce Committee.

So, the gentlewoman would be recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, I truly appreciate this dispensation you are giving me, and I appreciate the witnesses and Mr. Mfume. And I will make this fairly quick. I will submit some questions for the record for you, but I did want to come here.

The Postal Service has always been very important to me. I am a person that uses the Postal Service a lot. I write a lot of notes. I tell the story to people, when I was a student at Appalachian State University in the 1960s, somebody wrote me a letter: my

name; Boone, North Carolina; no address. The post office delivered it to me.

That is the positive feeling I have about the post office, and I want to see us have post offices like that all over the country. Now, I know it is too complicated now; life was not quite as complicated then.

I want you to know I use the post office a lot. The people in my area use it. It is an important infrastructure for all Americans, especially those in rural areas, not only to send important documents, bills and letters, but receive sensitive items, such as medications and all kinds of important packages. My husband uses it an awful lot.

Therefore, any disruption in the flow of mail through theft or other criminal interference should be taken very seriously.

Mr. Donahue, you have just outlined some excellent things that the post office is doing in conjunction with other people, and I am not going to ask you to go into detail now, but I am going to say, I would like to know what additional steps the Postal Service can do to protect mail and workers experiencing an increase in robberies and crime without additional cost to the post office. I would like to know if there are ways to do it.

And then you alluded to the fact that Congress might be able to do some things, and I would like to see those in writing.

And then to all the rest of the witnesses, we want—again, constituents want to know when they put a check for their rent or utilities in the mail, they expect it to be delivered on time, not months later, and then they receive service charges and all that.

But I would like to know from you all any—I will read your testimonies, but anything else that you do not have in your testimonies that we can do to help the situation.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate again your indulgence, and I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you very much. Is the gentlewoman seeking that she provided data and information and would look for them to address that during this hearing or to respond in writing?

Ms. FOXX. No. I will ask that they respond in writing, and I will have formal questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Respond in writing. Thank you very much, Chairman.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you. And we do have 20-plus votes, and they need me. Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma'am. Good luck at that. If you are at the Rules Committee, it can be done very expeditiously, I am sure.

Mr. Rothstein, you are now recognized.

**STATEMENT OF JULIUS ROTHSTEIN  
DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL, U.S. POSTAL SERVICE  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Mr. ROTHSTEIN. Good afternoon, Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, Members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Julius Rothstein. I am a Deputy Inspector General for the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General. I was an organized crime prosecutor for close to 30 years, and prior

to coming to the OIG, I led DOJ's largest crime intelligence fusion center.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the OIG's work on mail theft today. The OIG's mission is promoting the integrity and accountability and efficiency of the U.S. Postal Service and its regulator. We have oversight responsibility for an agency of close to 640,000, with an annual revenue of \$80 billion per year. We also are one of the most active OIGs when it comes to closing cases and securing convictions.

A significant focus of the oversight work that we do involves mail theft. It involves both our investigations and our audits. And while sometimes mail theft is a singular act done by an individual, it is often a comprehensive, complex, coordinated effort between a postal employee and outside criminal organizations.

As a result, we work in close cooperation with other law enforcement agencies to disrupt and dismantle all elements of this criminal network. Given the volume and complexity of these cases, we must leverage cutting-edge technology and data analytics that allow us to efficiently focus our limited resources.

One example is a powerful data tool that we developed in collaboration with the financial services industry and also the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It helps us pinpoint exactly where in the postal system stolen checks and credit cards go missing.

This tool has proven to be invaluable in allowing us to proactively identify mail theft. To date, this tool has identified around \$250 million in stolen financial instruments, leading us to open 75 investigations and obtaining more than 35 indictments.

Our data analytics support both our audits and our investigations into mail theft. Recently, we used data analytics and audits in targeted hotspots around the country where we saw mail theft increase.

We also examined the Postal Service's response to mitigating mail theft, and although we found some positive steps we are taking toward that end, there remain opportunities for improvement.

These run the gamut from low-tech to high-tech solutions, and they include better management and tracking of universal arrow keys, timely implementation of new technology, enhanced security and maintenance of mailboxes, and improved security management at postal facilities as simply as disallowing use of backpacks on the workroom floor.

Analytic support is crucial for our investigations so we may focus on stopping large-scale mail theft schemes where criminal organizations recruit postal employees often through encrypted messaging apps or social media platforms with the promise of a quick and easy buck.

These employees, who have access to the mail, allow them to steal letters containing checks, credit cards, and other financial instruments. Criminal groups then use these items to steal identities, commit forgery and fraud, or sell them usually on social media platforms.

In one recent case in Alabama, we caught a couple of postal employees who were recruited to steal checks and mail directed at local businesses. Co-conspirators would then alter these stolen checks for a higher amount and then sell them on encrypted mes-

saging apps. This group stole more than \$17 million from over 1,600 victims.

As a result of our efforts, one of the postal employees was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison, and another main co-conspirator received a sentence of eight years.

Sometimes a single hotline complaint from one of your constituents is all we need to open up a larger investigation. A recent Washington, D.C., area case started with that, a single hotline complaint about a stolen credit card. Through detailed analysis, we discovered that this was part of a larger overall criminal scheme and linked it to other law enforcement investigations in the area.

In collaboration with the Postal Inspection Service, as well as the Montgomery County Police in Maryland, we identified a postal worker and external collaborator who stole more than 2,000 checks worth a total estimated loss of \$2.8 million.

In another case, our special agents uncovered a large digital marketplace that sold stolen checks, which also included U.S. Treasury checks. This led to a joint Federal and local law enforcement investigation in North Carolina, and we found a postal employee and co-conspirators had stolen checks and sold them on this digital marketplace, costing the victims close to \$24 million.

This case also inspired us to develop an analytics tool that leverages AI to automate our ability to identify and analyze suspected stolen checks. Our agents can now search for these checks in far less time, making them more effective and efficient.

This is just a small sample of the work that we do that protects the Postal Service, its employees, and the American public.

Thank you, again, for allowing me the opportunity to talk about our work, and I look forward to answering any of your questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Rothstein, thank you very much.

The gentleman, Mr. Renfroe, is now recognized.

**STATEMENT OF BRIAN RENFROE, PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS**

Mr. RENFROE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Mfume, for the opportunity to testify on this issue that is critically important to the Nation's 200,000 active letter carriers.

The safety, health, and well-being of the public servants that I am privileged to represent are, of course, a top priority for me. They should be a top priority for all of us.

If we want to protect America's mail, we have to first protect the people who deliver it. Congress has an opportunity to do that by passing the bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, which is a comprehensive solution that would deter crime against postal employees, hold those who commit them accountable, and keep letter carriers and America's mail safer.

When I started as a letter carrier in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 21 years ago, violent crime was rare. Unfortunately, that is no longer the reality, as we have heard earlier in this hearing.

Since 2022, five letter carriers have been murdered while doing their jobs. Thousands of other postal employees have been violently attacked. Nearly every single day, I learn of another heartbreaking attack against one of our members. And we refuse to accept that

this is a new normal. It is dangerous for us, it is dangerous for the American people, it is dangerous for the mail.

Just last week, new Postmaster General David Steiner started his new appointment. He and other leaders of the Postal Service take this issue seriously, and they have pursued changes to deter these crimes, such as replacing our old lock-and-key system for accessing mailboxes.

My union supports the agency's Project Safe Delivery initiative, and we applaud the hard work of the Postal Inspection Service, which is made up of dedicated public servants just like the letter carriers that I represent.

But the simple fact is, despite their best efforts, the scope of this problem has severely outgrown their capacity to protect us, and we need protection now. We cannot wait for another letter carrier to be murdered, we cannot wait for more violent Federal crimes against these civil servants that serve the American people every single day to decide that it is finally time for legislative action. The time is now.

Even as these assaults continue to surge, the number of arrests and convictions remain alarmingly low. In recent years, less than half of these crimes have been followed by an arrest, and less than a quarter of these investigations led to convictions. So, the majority of those who violently rob and assault the public servants in uniform are getting away with it with no consequences.

Regardless of the administration in the White House, at any point in time the Department of Justice must prosecute these violent Federal crimes. Unlike many topics in this town, this is not a partisan or political issue. This is not a finger-pointing exercise. It is not a blame game. It is a problem that everyone should recognize and be 100 percent behind addressing.

No one wants violent crime in their neighborhood, especially crimes that target public servants and jeopardize the security of people's mail and packages. You know, everyone in this building that is privileged to serve after being elected as a Member of Congress is a public servant. All of the witnesses here on this panel today are public servants, as are many others in this room.

And a primary duty of any employer, but especially the government of the United States of America, should be to ensure the safety of its employees. And the top priority for any on-the-job safety should be to prevent and protect workers from the threat of violent crime.

Americans depend on us. They trust us. We proudly serve them every day by delivering mail and packages, as well as being important parts of our communities in a number of other ways. And letter carriers want nothing more than to serve our people, but we must be protected.

And the people that commit these crimes, they must be arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced. I urge you to pass the bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act.

Thank you, once again, for the invitation to testify, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Renfroe, thank you very much.

Mr. Alberg, you are now recognized for your opening statement. The gentleman is recognized.

**STATEMENT OF FRANK ALBERGO, PRESIDENT  
POSTAL POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr. ALBERGO. Good afternoon, Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

It is difficult to overstate how senseless and, quite frankly, indefensible the current posture of the Postal Inspection Service has become. We are not talking about abstract policy failures. We are talking about a measurable collapse in institutional responsibility happening in real time with real victims.

In 2010, there were just over 2,200 high-volume mail theft attacks. By 2023, that number skyrocketed to over 49,000, a 2,000-percent explosion. And yet, throughout this period, the Inspection Service denied there was a crisis, suppressed internal data, and removed its own uniform police from the streets.

This is not about lost birthday cards anymore. We have entered an era of organized postal crime. Earlier this year, the FBI warned Americans not to mail checks; a public vote of no confidence from one Federal agency to another.

And at a time when law enforcement agencies across the country were expanding uniform patrols, the Inspection Service did the opposite. In 2020, it benched its own Federal police force. Even worse, it publicly declared that it had comprehensively curtailed postal police patrols, effectively inviting postal crime.

Instead of prevention, the Inspection Service has become reactive, conducting investigations only after the damage is done. But you cannot stop crime with a case file. You stop it with visible police presence. That is what the postal police force did for 50 years. That is what we are still trained and equipped to do. And if anyone says otherwise, they are not being truthful.

The Inspection Service's own data confirmed that postal police officers are the agency's most effective tool to stop street-level postal crime. I provided the Subcommittee with that data showing sharp declines in mail theft and robberies whenever and wherever postal police are deployed.

Now, contrast that to Project Safe Delivery, essentially a PR campaign long on talking points and short on deterrence. Hard and blue boxes and lengthy investigations do not stop criminals from prying open cluster box units, raiding postal delivery trucks, or sticking a gun in a carrier's face.

Meanwhile, both the GAO and the OIG have reached the same conclusion. The Inspection Service has no method to determine staffing needs, no performance metrics, and no strategy for prevention. And instead of fixing it, the Inspection Service asked for more time, until 2026, to decide what to do while hoping Congress does not notice that the mail keeps getting stolen.

But the solution already exists: the postal police force. Specifically, H.R. 2095, the Postal Police Reform Act, a bipartisan bill that restores postal police authority to patrol high-risk areas beyond postal property where postal police officers (PPO)s are needed most.

This no-cost legislation is endorsed by the National Association of Police Organizations, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association. But instead of rein-

vesting in uniformed deterrence, the Inspection Service is quietly dismantling it through attrition and chronic under hiring to pay for investigative functions that often duplicate the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and others.

If the Inspection Service truly wants to save money, it should cut unnecessary inspector investigations, not highly effective police patrols. But it will not because the decisions are being made by postal inspectors for postal inspectors.

Since 2016, the postal police force has been decimated by over 33 percent. Today, PPOs are being quietly phased out. And yet, the number of postal inspectors remains fixed at about 1,300. For every inspector hired, the Postal Service could have hired two PPOs at less cost. Still, the Inspection Service insists that this is a job for postal inspectors.

But here is what the Department of Justice told the Ninth Circuit. The overwhelming majority of postal inspectors' time is spent working at a desk or in an office setting. That is the DOJ. Not patrolling, not intervening, and often claiming credit for arrests made by local police, padding performance metrics without ever leaving their cubicles. That is not law enforcement. That is bureaucracy.

We know what works. Uniformed deterrence, geographic targeting, and data-driven patrols. Not drawn-out, costly investigations that rarely lead to arrests or convictions.

PPOs are already trained, already deployed to the highest risk zip codes and already on the payroll, but banned by policy from stepping off postal property. That is not law enforcement. That is policy failure.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Albergo, thank you very much.

Chief Holloway, welcome. The gentleman is recognized.

**STATEMENT OF ANTHONY HOLLOWAY, CHIEF OF POLICE  
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you, sir.

Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, Members of the Committee, my name is Anthony Holloway. I am the Chief of Police with the St. Petersburg Police Department with over 39 years of law enforcement experience; ten years as the police chief with the St. Petersburg Police Department; prior to that, Clearwater and Somerville, Massachusetts.

The city of St. Petersburg is the fifth largest city in Florida, with a population of over 266,000. The St. Petersburg Police Department has sustained a two-decade collaboration with United States Postal Inspection Services, initially through our canine task force embedded in the drug interdiction unit.

In July 2023, this partnership expanded when United States Postal Inspection Service, Tampa Division, invited the St. Petersburg Police Department to join its newly formed financial crime task force to combat the surge in check fraud linked to stolen mail.

Detective Daniel Nettleton was selected on August 23 to join this task force as a task force officer to initiate—to initial upon the completion of United States Postal Inspection Service task officer train-

ing program on February 20, 2024, assuming full-time ability to investigate crime.

The detective was assigned to investigate check fraud investigations stemming from intercepted United States postal mail, as well as theft from postal bicycles, vehicles, and facilities within the city limits of St. Petersburg and any Federal crime across the Tampa Bay area.

In June 2024, his work led to arrests of two separate suspects, one who is facing pending Federal charges, and this enforcement activity corresponds with the nearly decrease of 50 percent reduction in reported check fraud crime to the city of St. Petersburg Police Department.

In June 2023 through June 2024, we had 256 cases. In June 2024 through June 2025, we only had 134 cases. In late 2024, the detective spearheaded an investigation into the alleged election mail theft, an inquiry that elevated to the DOJ Public Integrity Unit in Washington, D.C. Federal prosecutors resulted in additional arrests and pending Federal charges.

With this task officer assigned to this task force, it has taken down the barriers where it allows the officers to work outside the jurisdiction of St. Petersburg, Florida, where the mail is stolen in the city of St. Petersburg, and then the suspect then goes to either another city or another county and then commits the fraud.

Prior to this task force, the officers could only take a report number, and we could not investigate those crimes. Now, due to joining this task force, these officers can continue to investigate these crimes being closer not only to the residents, but also to the business owners into the city of St. Petersburg and also allowing these suspects know that we will follow them no matter where they enter.

Our main job in the city of St. Petersburg is to make sure not only our citizens are safe, but also anyone that works, play, and visit in our city.

For the detective's outstanding work, he received a letter of commendation from Tom Sylvester, issuing a commendation on November 24, praising his experience and his valuable role working for the Tampa financial crimes task force.

I want to thank you very much for allowing me here to speak today, and I will answer any questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Chief, thank you very much.

I will first go to the distinguished gentleman, Mr. Mfume, for any questions in his 5 minutes. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Without objection, I am going to yield out of order to Mr. Frost, thank him also for developing the opening statement, and yield back to you right now.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The U.S. Postal Service investigation service has reportedly joined an investigative task force to help the President, Stephen Miller, and Kristi Noem's Department of Homeland Security carry out mass deportation efforts against immigrants.

In April, United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) officers reportedly participated in an immigration raid where more than

100 immigrants were detained in a Colorado nightclub. Only two of the people arrested had outstanding warrants.

I strongly believe that the Postal Service should not divert USPIS officers to partner with the Administration on this work that they are doing. My Democratic colleagues and I on this Committee recently sent a letter to both the Postal Service and USPIS demanding transparency on the reported coordination with DHS as it targets people for detention and deportation. We have not held back—heard back. So, hoping to have some questions answered here.

Inspector Donahue, how often does the Inspection Service cooperate with DHS on investigations involving immigration enforcement?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, thank you for the question. First, let me clarify.

The Postal Inspection Service does not have immigration enforcement authority, and we do not conduct immigration investigations. And I just want to make that very clear.

Mr. FROST. You do not conduct investigations, but do you at some points divert personnel to help with some of that operation?

Mr. DONAHUE. We do not divert personnel. Any participation in any sort of enforcement operation, such as the one that you noted in April, that would be related to a postal crime.

So, while there may be an immigration operation, our participation, again, related to a postal crime. So, for example, somebody mailing drugs, fentanyl through the mail, somebody committing identity theft, somebody engaging in money laundering. That would be the extent of our presence at one of those operations.

Mr. FROST. Are you familiar with that exact situation? What was the postal crime associated that warranted the officers being there?

Mr. DONAHUE. I believe in that specific circumstance, it was a narcotics-related matter.

Mr. FROST. Are there standing meetings between leadership at USPIS and DHS regarding immigration enforcement?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, I am not familiar with any meetings between leadership and DHS on immigration enforcement. We certainly have met with DHS and FBI and other counterparts relative to the homeland security task forces, but we regularly participate in those types of task forces, again, specific to postal-related crime.

So, those involving the sending of drugs through the mail, the money laundering, those targeting cartels, those engaged in human trafficking where the mail may be used to facilitate that, again, such as with money laundering.

That would be our extent of participation in those task forces; again, not related to immigration enforcement.

Mr. FROST. How many USPIS personnel have been assigned to such cases thus far?

Mr. DONAHUE. Can you provide some clarity to me when you say—

Mr. FROST. Cases that—cases where DHS is involved because there is an immigration matter, but there is also some sort of postal issue going on as well.

Mr. DONAHUE. So, I am not sure at this time. But my team behind me can take that question back, and we will provide a written response.

Mr. FROST. Thank you. Are there any ongoing agreements that oblige y'all to cooperate with any of this?

Mr. DONAHUE. I am not aware of any agreements that are in place that would oblige us to cooperate if you are speaking relative to any sort of immigration matter.

Mr. FROST. What happens to inspectors' regular work of combating mail crime if they are assigned to cases that have to do with immigration enforcement?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, I am not aware of us, again, working any of those cases. We do not have immigration enforcement authority. We do not conduct immigration investigations.

Our investigations, again, are focused on those postal crimes. That is where our expertise is, and I expect that is where it will continue to be long into the future.

Mr. FROST. We have seen reports of DHS and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). But they have reportedly broken the law; violated constitutional rights of citizens, noncitizens; detained veterans; different things like this.

As it relates to cases where USPIS officers are engaged with DHS, is there any kind of guidance that you all are giving your inspectors when it comes to working with DHS?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, our guidance would be our existing policies that we follow, that the Postal Inspection Service has that guides the work that we do, in addition to following the law and the Constitution, and what we do every single day with investigations that we conduct regardless of who those investigations are, whether the Federal, state, or local level.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much. I look forward to response on some of the numbers we spoke about.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. Gentleman yields back his time. Distinguished gentleman, the young Chairman, Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have seen a spike in mail theft and postal-related crime.

Is there a particular reason why we are seeing that, Mr. Donahue?

Mr. DONAHUE. I believe so. There are a number of reasons. First, as I referred to in my oral testimony, then also my written testimony, we have seen a shift from criminal activity from what would be considered high-risk, high-reward crimes, such as drug trafficking, to those organizations engaging in low-risk, high-reward financial crimes. And that is really what motivates individuals to commit mail theft.

They are seeking to steal the mail to perpetrate financial crimes that has driven activity, also online forums and marketplaces where—whether it is stolen checks, postal keys can be easily sold, and also the use of encrypted messaging that makes it more difficult for law enforcement to be able to intercept those communications and to be able to conduct its investigations.

All of those things, I believe, have helped to add to this atmosphere where criminals believe it is permissive to commit these

crimes, and I think also there is a significant issue when it comes to deterrence and being able to deter these.

Again, in my oral written testimony, I spoke to some of the prosecutorial challenges we have, but then also some of the challenges that we have with sentencing.

Mr. PALMER. Well, let me ask you.

Mr. DONAHUE. Yes, sir.

Mr. PALMER. I want to go a little bit deeper into this, a little different direction.

So, based on your answer there, are they seeking to get personal identification information from the mail, and if they are doing that, are they transferring that, selling that information to international organizations? I mean, is that where we are seeing the uptick?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, I believe the uptick is what I mentioned before, specific to the theft of financial instruments. But certainly, we see the theft of mail to perpetrate identity theft, the theft of personal identifying information.

Mr. PALMER. You see international groups involved in that?

Mr. DONAHUE. We certainly do see international groups in a lot of investigations that we conduct, both involving mail theft, financial crimes, and others.

Mr. PALMER. We saw during the COVID pandemic an enormous amount of theft in regard to unemployment bonus compensation and other compensation, and a lot of that was perpetrated by international groups. Some of it was perpetrated within the United States by different groups, and they were using the mail, for instance, where states sent out debit cards.

Is that part of—have we seen—has that continued going forward, that type criminal activity? Anyone can answer.

Mr. DONAHUE. So, we certainly have seen, as you noted, during the pandemic where criminal organizations, both domestically and overseas, perpetrated mass pandemic fraud, taking advantage of the large amount of money that was made available, and also some of the looser restrictions on obtaining those funds.

And then in some cases stealing checks or prepaid debit cards or other payment mechanisms that were in the mail to perpetrate these crimes.

Mr. PALMER. Where do most of these crimes occur? Do they occur at the individual's post office box at the street or—I think theft at collection boxes has gone down quite a bit.

Are they interdicting the postal delivery officer en route? Where do most of the thefts occur?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, if it involves the Postal Service in terms of that financial crime, the theft of PII, personal identifying information, or financial instrument, that can occur anywhere along the process in which mail is being sent or received.

And so, in some cases that is at the street level, and when it is at the collection box. In some cases, it is when it is at a person's mailbox at their house that is unsecured. In other cases, unfortunately, there are a very small number of individuals that work for the Postal Service who commit crime and take advantage of their position and steal mail from there, which Mr. Rothstein spoke to earlier.

So, we see it all along the process where there is potential for theft.

Mr. PALMER. What should people be doing to secure their personal identification information against mail theft?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, there are a number of things that individuals can do to secure their personal identifying information against mail theft. First, suggest that individuals, when they receive their mail, that they pick it up as soon as possible when it is delivered to their mailbox.

We encourage customers to sign up for Informed Delivery. That gives them a preview of mail that is coming to their house so they can identify what mail is going to come to their house, and they can be on the lookout for it and get it.

We also encourage individuals, if they are going to send mail, to mail in the most secure way possible; they can bring it into the post office; they can hand it to their letter carrier who will take it from them; or if they work at a place of business, they can have it picked up there.

Those are just some of the tips that we provide to the public on how to safely and securely send their mail.

Mr. PALMER. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, one last question.

Do you provide that information online, or how would you get that information to the customers of the U.S. Postal Office?

Mr. DONAHUE. Thank you. So, we do provide it a number of ways. In some cases online, in some cases the prevention material that I showed before that we worked on with the American Bankers Association, which is made available through them and all the other financial institutions.

In some cases, we share it with the public through community forums, through presentations, in some cases, coming on to Members of the House and their town halls that they have with their constituents where we are more than happy to participate and share that information.

Social media.

Again, there are a number of ways that we share that information.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you. I thank the witnesses, thank the Chairman for his indulgence, and I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. Gentleman yields back his time.

The gentlewoman, Ms. Norton, is recognized.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Postal Service has a mandate to provide efficient and reliable mail service to every address in America. That mandate requires the security of the mail and the people who deliver it.

Unfortunately, crime committed through or against the U.S. mail system remains high. The Postal Service must maintain strong prevention and enforcement activities to stop this crime. Historically, postal police officers defended employees, customers, and property against the clock seven days a week, wherever there was email.

But in 2020, the Postal Service issued a determination that post officers limit their role in postal facilities. Today, the Postal Service employs 450 postal police officers that guard postal facilities across the country.

Mr. Albergo, what examples of crimes can postal police officers not assist with under this current policy?

Mr. ALBERGO. So, under current policy, if a postal police officer is traveling from one post office to another, and we witness mail theft in progress, if we witness a letter carrier being attacked, we are told to stand down, we are told to call 911.

In New York, we are prohibited from responding. We cannot respond. They do not want us to respond.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. The Government Accountability Office issued a report in 2024 that found that the Postal Inspection Service improperly documented, and here I quote, “the processes for determining how many law enforcement workers it needs across its divisions to respond to serious crime.”

It is surprising that the Postal Service lacks this critical data to inform the strategic personnel and security procedures.

Mr. Donahue, has the Postal Service prepared a cross-current review of its inspector workforce and security assessment? If so, can you provide this information to the Committee as soon as it is complete?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, thank you for that question. In regards to the workforce assessment that you spoke of, that is underway now, and I expect that it will be completed by September 1. And we will make sure that, once that is complete and available to share, that that is shared with you.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. I hope the new Postmaster General will reverse the Postal Service’s decision to limit postal police officers’ jurisdiction. If not, Congress should.

I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

Ms. Randall, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You know, Americans in all of our districts rely on the Postal Service to ensure the safe and efficient delivery of sensitive information, personal letters, cards, financial documents, medicines, ballots. And regardless of where Americans might live, the Postal Service, as we all know, has a legal and universal obligation to, quote, “provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.”

Unfortunately for Americans living in rural parts of the country, like Queets, and Elma and Quilcene and the Key Peninsula in my district, this is a far cry from their lived reality, partly due to postal-related crime.

Despite the recent collaborative efforts from the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Services to combat rampant mail theft and crimes targeting letter carriers, postal-related crimes continue to disproportionately impact local, rural communities in my home state.

In Washington, mail theft has spiked, and more letter carriers are being attacked on the job. Since last December, West Seattle has reported multiple cases of mail stolen directly from delivery trucks. In Spanaway, a carrier was robbed at gunpoint for his arrow key, which, as you know, is the universal key that unlocks mailboxes and cluster mailboxes.

Inspector Donahue and Mr. Rothstein, what are your respective agencies doing to address the violent attacks on carriers in communities like mine and across the country?

Mr. DONAHUE. So, first, in regards to your community and every state, the Postal Inspection Service has postal inspectors located across the country in nearly every state, and also in our territories. And we utilize those personnel to respond to attacks on employees to investigate those cases and to bring those responsible for it to justice, and especially when there is an attack, we prioritize those cases and ensure that they are thoroughly investigated.

In regard to other steps that we have taken, prevention being one of them, and there are a number of ways that we have done that. Raising awareness amongst postal employees about steps that they can take to protect themselves, raising awareness amongst the public about steps that they can protect their mail, which may lessen the chances of an attack on an employee depending upon the motive.

In addition to that, we have helped secure our network by investing and making improvements to infrastructure that we have. I spoke about the additional e-locks that we are installing earlier in my testimony, and then also our high-security collection boxes and really trying to devalue that arrow key so it is not an attractive target for a criminal in order to steal that.

Another way that we have done it, is partnering with local and state law enforcement agencies to add task force officers to serve as a force multiplier. You know, some of the biggest challenges that we have with prosecution are in some cases with juveniles. I think, as you know, there is no Federal juvenile system, but yet we see juveniles recruited to help perpetrate these crimes. And in some cases, they are committing these violent acts, but the Federal system is not appropriate for them.

And so, our partnership with local, state law enforcement agencies allows us to leverage the power of their state authority or local authority that they have to bring charges there. And those are just some of the steps that we have taken.

And I will note we are looking to add additional task force officers, both on financial crimes and our violent crime task force officers, but those that investigate other crimes. And certainly, that is available in Washington State and in other states represented by the Members here.

Ms. RANDALL. Mr. Rothstein, do you have anything to add?

Mr. ROTHSTEIN. Yes. I would like to state that, again, the primary responsibility for investigating violent crime against mail carriers does lie with the Inspection Service, but we do, at the OIG, work violent crime cases.

Quite frankly, I get an incident report every time that there is violence done within a mail facility or done to one of our carriers, and it gets to my desk, and I hear about it that morning when that happens.

And although it is not a primary responsibility, our special agents work hand in hand with postal inspectors, just like they do with us during our cases. And especially if it is a violent case where we are asked for assistance, our special agents will roll out there, do surveillance, help work with the arrest scene.

And if I ever hear that our agents decline an offer to assist with that, I will make corrective action in that, because that is simply not the way that we roll. And it is simply not the partnership that we want to have.

Even though we do have oversight of the Inspection Service, we know that in investigating these cases, especially when dealing with public safety or the safety of postal employees, we are going to be working those cases arm in arm.

Ms. RANDALL. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The gentleman, Mr. Mfume, the Ranking Member, my dear friend, you are recognized.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for the working partnership that we have had on this Committee and the bipartisan manner in which we have tried to deal with a number of different things, not the least of which is our love and respect for the Postal Service and the men and women that make it work day in and day out.

I cannot underscore enough how I appreciate the testimony and the work of all of you who have come before us today. Each one of these sessions becomes a learning tool for those of us who sit on this Committee, because we do not see everything from every angle. So, your perspective on all these things alone is very, very important.

I think that without a doubt we are all still astonished by more than a quarter of a million complaints of mail and mail volume receptacle theft that we continue to hear about and read about.

The Postal Service, as has been said, and as we all know, has a constitutional mandate. It is, in fact, a lifeline for millions and millions of Americans, particularly in rural communities and those people who cannot fight and stand up for themselves, but who rely day in and day out on a basic service that has been so much part and parcel of the fabric of our Nation, going all the way back to Benjamin Franklin.

And so, it is crucial that the Post Office, in my opinion, has the resources to carry out their mission and to realize also that in many respects this is about data, but it is more than data.

It is also about human beings who are on the other side of the equation. We refer to them as letter carriers. And they work day in and day out to make sure that the service that we have come to take for granted is still there.

What we find challenging is the rate of devilish interception and the rate of interception that comes from thieves, and this criminal mindset that if you put up two fences, we want to find a way to scale a third one.

It is trying to get in front of those persons and getting in front of that criminal mind that is a real challenge, not just in this matter but in all matters.

So, the more you can work to do that, I think it is clear that the more it is appreciated by a lot of us.

And I have listened. And this whole issue of Project Safe Delivery, I do not want to undercount it. I think it is important. The

progress that is being made there is important. I commend the inspector generals. Your work is a tough job day in and day out.

But we have got to find a way, I think, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that as we use cutting-edge technology, and as we work to improve data analysis so that we can reduce, if not to some extent try to eliminate much of this problem, is important.

I cannot help but to go back again to letter carriers and what they are faced with in the street. In my own district in Baltimore, we continue to get reports of assaults and attempted assaults on letter carriers.

I sometimes will get out of my car and talk with one or two of them just for them to feel comfortable enough to give me a straightforward feel of what they see every day, what they feel in their heart, what their ideas are on how we can find a way to get a handle on this, and it is an amazing kind of testimony.

So, when we here on this Committee try to deal with this issue openly and objectively in a nonpartisan way, we really have to be open to every suggestion—suggestions on the data side, suggests on the human side—that hopefully will move us forward.

Mail fraud and all that it has brought about is disturbing. I cannot begin to tell you that. I listened to the gentlewoman from North Carolina talk about what her experience was back in the 1960s.

So, many people have positive experiences with the Postal Service. The Postal Service's rating among Americans has been high for such a long time, and it is because the Postal Service is a part of the family. That is how people look at things.

So, when I, Mr. Alberg, listen to your testimony, I am reminded of that testimony I heard from you and from many of your men.

In fact, a year ago, or two years ago, they presented me with their badge. They said, "Take this, put it in your desk, do not ever forget that the Postal Police are out here and that we are out here to service you and to service the country."

I just think we have got to create, Mr. Chairman, a way to give the police clear lines of demarcation so we will know what they can do, what they cannot do, and what we expect them to do, and how we are going to support them.

So, I would ask all of you what is the number one thing we could do. I am sure that is to provide necessary resources.

But above and beyond that, I just want to thank you all for your service. I want to pledge the commitment of this side of the aisle as the Chairman and I work together on these issues to try to move a Congress, which is really stratified these days and dug in on different sides of the fence.

We try to find that sliver in the middle where most people are, which is where you are governed from, not the far left or the far right, but the middle. And people expect us to be able, in that middle, to move along in such a way that we create progress.

So, I am sure this is not going to be the last time that we see some of you before the Committee. I would strongly urge, outside of your written testimony, if there are new things that develop over the course of the next couple of months, that you transmit them to the Chairman and myself so that we can also take those into consideration; and where there needs to be clarity on news reports

sometimes that are a little ambitious, to say the least, that you provide us with what the actual facts were and are.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would yield back the balance of my time. Thank you, again. It has been a good working partnership. And I yield.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Mfume, thank you very much. The chance to hear your comments about the workability of this Subcommittee, I hope, is important to anyone who is listening, because when we do work together, I think we achieve so much more.

I would ask unanimous consent that a statement provided by the National Association of Postal Supervisors be entered into the record, by Mr. Chuck Mulidore, who is in attendance today with Mr. Levi.

And I welcome both of you.

Without objection, that will be entered into the record.

Mr. MFUME. Good to see both of you again.

Mr. SESSIONS. It is good.

Chief Holloway, you have heard Mr. Mfume give strong credence and support to postal workers, postal employees, that also include their law enforcement, and the men and women who take an obligation to deliver our mail fairly, quickly, properly.

And I think it is the reason why you were included on here, or at least the reason why I included you, was we also count on our local partners. And you represent, by being a chief in Florida of a large department, you recognize that we just do not have enough Postal police officers, inspector generals, and those postal inspectors to be looking out everywhere, every time.

Talk to us about a reasonableness issue related to the way you see it, about your officers, your command, your use of your force in support of crimes that may be committed against people, including the United States Postal Service.

Chief HOLLOWAY. Thank you very much, Chairman, for that question.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes. I am sorry, sir. Is your microphone on?

Chief HOLLOWAY. It is, sir.

Mr. SESSIONS. Okay. I need to turn my hearing aid up. I do not have one, but I will pay attention here. Thank you, sir.

Chief HOLLOWAY. Thank you, again, sir, and thank you for the question.

In the city of St. Petersburg, we have over 602 officers, and our partnership with the United States Postal Inspection Service works quite well because it gives us that added tool that we need to help enforce the crime that is in our community.

Again, as I said in my earlier statement, it breaks down some of the walls to give the investigators the ability to go throughout the county and throughout the state to follow these criminals no matter where they are.

Our main primary goal is to make sure that the citizens in the city of St. Petersburg are safe at all times, and the people that work there, our mail carriers. So, when there is an issue, that we want to be working hand in hand with the inspectional services to make sure that we can address that.

I can tell you—I only can speak for the Tampa Bay region—that when something does happen, that the inspectors and the local law

enforcement officers are working hand in hand together to figure out how we are going to, one, make sure that the mail person is safe, and also make sure the community is safe.

The biggest thing that we see early, again, like I said earlier, is that the victims, when their checks or when their credit cards are stolen from them, there was no followup, because it happens in one jurisdiction, and the suspect will go to another jurisdiction, and those two local law enforcement agencies are only going to handle the crime that occurred in their city.

Whereas working with our Federal partners, it allows us the opportunity to go across those barriers, so we can bring not only those suspects into custody, but also to bring these victims what they need, closure, because even though the money is put back into their accounts, they are still a victim of identity theft, and they still have to live through that.

So, that is our job, is to make sure that we continue to bring closure to those victims and also to make sure we get these suspects in custody.

Mr. SESSIONS. Very nice. So you are stretched also for your resources?

Chief HOLLOWAY. I am very fortunate, Chair, that my mayor, my city council, whatever we need, we are able to get those resources available to us. Again, I only can speak for my city and my law enforcement.

Could we use more law enforcement officers out there? Of course we can. But at the same time, when we have an issue, we have the right resources that we can bring to those issues that are needed.

Mr. SESSIONS. So, I heard you say, without you saying it, that you believe that if there is a crime perpetrated against someone, some sort of a mail crime, that you would, in fact, go and initiate, write a report.

And then, do you then refer that, generally speaking, to the postal inspectors? Or what is your process? Or do you even know what that might be?

Chief HOLLOWAY. No, sir. Because we have an officer, a detective, assigned now to the Postal Inspection Service, so we have a task force officer, so he is available now, and he can investigate those crimes, where before we were part of the task force, it would just sit there. It would just be a report number waiting for someone to look at it.

Now, with us joining the task force 18 months ago, we are now actively working these cases each and every day. So, when a case is reported to the St. Petersburg Police Department, we actively look into it, and we use our partners at the Post Office to make sure we can continue these investigations.

Mr. SESSIONS. Without putting words into your mouth, because you have this association that is a strong working relationship, is there, generally speaking, a time of the year that you believe your officers would be reminded and there would be at a higher level of understanding to be looking for mail crimes, postal crimes to occur, to where, because you do have that relationship, it helps your officers to spot and solve these matters?

Chief HOLLOWAY. It does by that detective assigned to the task force. When he sees something, he can report it back to our intel-

ligence unit, and we can put a BOLO out so those zone officers, or even our surveillance team, will know where to go, so they can provide protection for those mail carriers when we see an issue that we need to address, or that we get information that we are looking for a certain suspect, that we can also be able to follow those suspects and make sure there is no harm caused to our mail carriers in the city of St. Petersburg.

Mr. SESSIONS. It is refreshing for me to hear that you care about them as you do any other citizen, and thank you very much.

Mr. Rothstein or Mr. Donahue, do you have an understanding about maybe the success that might be turned about—and I am going to use the wrong term, but there was a term, maybe “notice of delivery,” I have had that in my mail, or where they notify you of the delivery. Do you perceive that you could use that as a tool where you know you had certain post offices or where you had certain areas where there were checks that came in or an abundance of something to where you would then notify—it is easier to find, I assume also, a piece of mail that has been, I will call it, tagged, a notice of delivery.

Does that help you in your investigative duties proactively? Or can you discuss that viewpoint that I think I have had about maybe this is an important way to help you solve crimes?

Mr. ROTHSTEIN. Yes, Chairman. I believe that IIC Donahue talked about the Informed Delivery system. And, again, it is one way that any postal customer can sign up for the Postal Service’s Informed Delivery system, that will give them an email, to their email of choice, of the letters and now even packages that are slated to be delivered to that address.

So, that customer, that postal customer who is expecting a credit card or expecting a check, will have an actual image of that envelope and that mail that is supposed to be delivered for them.

And, again, this goes into being a good consumer. If you do not receive it, you are given notice that, well, sometimes delays happen. Give it a couple days. If you do not receive it within three days, I always say, give the OIG a call.

Because, again, if it was on the mailman’s part, that is primarily our responsibility, to investigate the internal employees if they are involved. Go to our hotline, file a complaint, give our OIG a call.

And we do use data for that. I know that the Ranking Member talked about data and the difference. Yes, there is a difference between victims of violent crime, as well as looking at the data.

But the data does enlighten and give our agents insight into what is happening. If you are familiar with military threat attack doctrine or cybercrime, there is a term called “zero day,” and that is the time of realization of that vulnerability when it is either a cyber-attack or a military attack.

The zero day when it comes down to financial crime is the realization that your accounts have been compromised—a check has been stolen, someone has withdrawn amounts or charged to your credit card, or created another credit card in your name. That happens, unfortunately, so much later because sometimes consumers are either not very, again, vigilant in checking their credit card statements and check statements, or they are just simply unaware fraud has happened.

What the data has done, especially with this data-sharing partnership that we have with the Treasury Department and more than a dozen banks in the United States, is that we get this data, and we are informed about credit cards and checks that are not delivered in the requisite amount of time.

It allows us sometimes to act even before that fraud is committed or that check is converted or stolen on the, again, encrypted messaging apps. And that is a huge tool in reducing the cost to consumers, huge in reducing the cost to financial institutions.

And it gives us a leg up because now we know what financial instrument has been compromised. And we could look through the, again, the platforms that we know are being used for illicit sales and resales of these stolen items that were stolen from the mail. And so, it gives law enforcement a leg up.

And so, when you talk about successes, again, it is one thing to talk about how this is effective. I would not necessarily call it successes right now because we are seeing, again, similar actions like this that we do not have the resources to respond to from last year and projected this year alone.

We use data and all these data sources to examine what are the potentially similar or different types of cases that we do not have the resources to open, and, unfortunately, that number is over 100,000 different cases. And, quite frankly, with 450 agents, we are limited in what actions we do take.

And so, it makes us more effective, but we are far from, I think, seeing the success that the American public really deserves in having their financial instruments, their hard-earned money secured.

Mr. SESSIONS. I think that what you have said is not just a positive attribute of the system but shows its flexibility with the ability to proactively contact customers to let them know, offer services, and do those things.

One of the things which I regularly try and do is I try and give tips or feedback to people, whether it be about Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security. I really need to include something about this Informed Delivery.

And while I have been a part of it in the past, I did not know how I got it. It showed up. I became aware of it. I think it was a positive thing.

But I definitely think that someone that is looking for something that has been talked about, by not just Mr. Frost, not just Virginia Foxx, not just Ms. Randall, but valuables—valuables—that I am looking for something as opposed to something showing up.

I think that that would be a hot tip that I would be pleased to notify my people.

Last, the issue of cluster boxes, cluster boxes have created within the congressional district that I represent in largely new areas, large areas where maybe a new homeowners association was formed or a new housing project came in.

Does anybody have any advice about something that they have learned about how to better secure them, data and information that might be a tip to a consumer? Any one of you.

Mr. DONAHUE. So, in regard to cluster boxes and securing them, I think one of the most important things that somebody who is a resident of a neighborhood that has a cluster box, if there is dam-

age to it, either if it is due to purposeful damage or if it is inadvertent damage, that they report that, so that that can be repaired.

I see so often there were cluster box units, and even in apartment buildings, those apartment mailbox panels, they become damaged, and then they become potential targets for theft and go unreported.

And to the extent that it can be shared with the public, to report those instances when it is damaged, to do so. And that also affords us in the Postal Service the ability to determine whether or not potentially that cluster box unit was broken into and if it was purposeful, or if there was some other reason for it.

And so, it also affords us the opportunity to work with the homeowners association to get it repaired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Good.

Mr. MFUME, I would offer, if you have any other questions. I, while being here, I have found this most instructive. It is a question that you and I and probably every Member deals with one way or another. Sometimes frustration,

Mr. MFUME. Yes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Sometimes achievement. But I will tell you that one thing that you and I know, and that is the men and women, by and large, vastly across this Service, are devoted to not only their job, but also think of themselves as being public servants also. And I think that that is a high standard that speaks volumes about each and every one of you.

Chief, you would fit in there also, though not with the Postal Service, but in service.

The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. MFUME. Yes, let me followup on this matter of cluster boxes and arrow keys. It seems like it is all I have been talking about the last five years.

Is it correct to assume that if I rob you and I am able to evade the Postal Police, and I go to a cluster box and take this universal key and put it in, it will open all of my access to all of the mailboxes? Is that correct? Is there a code that has to precede that?

Mr. RENFROE. No. So, the arrow lock-and-key system that we have had for many years, that we still utilize today in most of the country, if you get your hands on that key, you can open anything, at minimum, within that ZIP Code, sometimes far, far beyond that—collection boxes, cluster boxes.

It is one of the reasons that a very, very important piece of the solution is an effort that the Postal Service has already undertaken, and that is to replace them with an electronic alternative.

We have done testing in the past. They are, as aggressively as they can, replacing them with an electronic alternative that does not have that same value.

Mr. MFUME. And how many of these cluster boxes do you anticipate exist nationwide?

Mr. RENFROE. Well, there are over nine million locks, which is—every one of those locks has got to be changed manually.

And that is one of the important pieces of the bipartisan legislation that has been introduced in the House and the Senate, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act, is that it will provide funding so that the Postal Service could speed up replacement of not just that

entire key system, but also the high security collection boxes that Mr. Donahue was mentioning.

Mr. MFUME. Right. And I understand. I mean, I am a cosponsor of the bill here in the House. I get it, trust me.

I am just trying to figure out how in the hell did we get in a situation where we created an entry system for nine million, or how many millions there are out there of boxes where there are going to be valuables, checks, personal information, medicine, that people are waiting for? How did we get to that, do you know?

Mr. RENFROE. I think many years ago, decades ago, that was the only alternative, and like many other things with the Postal Service that we have talked about in this very room, it has been starved of modernization. And, unfortunately, we are at a point where the modernization of this particular system being past due is harming people, frankly.

Mr. MFUME. So, until we get to the point, through data and electronics and analytics, that we can replace or reduce that, is there no suggestion, no way around that?

I mean, we cannot put a Postal Police officer at every cluster box. And so, we know that this rate of crime continues to go up.

Are there suggestions that any of you have about what we can do in the interim, knowing where we are trying to go with this?

In the interim, what can take place to reduce some of the pain and a great deal of the loss that is out there every day?

Mr. ALBERGO. Well, when we know an arrow key is stolen and we know the same blue collection boxes are being hit over and over again, the same cluster boxes are being hit over and over again, and you have trained Postal Police officers, it might be a good idea to actually deploy those Postal Police officers to protect those boxes that are being infiltrated.

Mr. MFUME. Well, Mr. Albergo, it seems to me that the previous Postmaster reduced the authority of Postal Police and on many occasions said that their jurisdiction was not applicable here, there, or somewhere else. And the Congress did not, in my opinion, do all it could to provide the resources.

So, you are understaffed. You are in a situation where we have got a new Postmaster. There is previous precedent where the outgoing or long-gone Postmaster has said Postal Police should not go here, they should not go there, they should not do this, and we are going to provide less money.

So, I guess, I do not want to tell you what your testimony is here, but I would like to know what you would suggest to this body before we conclude this hearing on how do we find a way to increase jurisdiction and at the same time increase the ability to bring on more.

Mr. ALBERGO. Well, the enabling statute that gives Postal Police their authority is ambiguous. So, the Postal Service can interpret that statute any way they want.

They made a policy choice to bench the Postal Police Force during a postal crime wave. I mean, it was misguided. They are saying—I mean, what are they supposed to say at this point? It was really stupid? I mean, that is not what they are going to say.

So, they are looking for excuses when—and who is suffering? I mean, when they hardened those blue collection boxes, it just dis-

placed the crime. It put a target on letter carriers' backs, and carriers started getting robbed.

And while that was happening, the Inspection Service—it was not actually their choice. It was Postal legal that made the decision. They grounded the Postal Police. And not only did they ground us, when media asked why, they said: Well, Postal Police do not have any jurisdictional authority.

And most people do not differentiate Postal Police from the Postal Inspection Service. So, the Postal Service was actually saying the Inspection Service—or this is what people were hearing—the Inspection Service does not have authority to arrest mail thieves. So, it was a criminal free-for-all.

Mr. MFUME. Yes, yes. That it was, that it was.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Alberg.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you very much.

This now ends the hearing portion of this, and I would defer to Mr. Mfume if he would choose to give a closing statement, and then I plan to.

Mr. MFUME. No, I really do not have much more to say. I think the witnesses can see my frustration. I can see their frustration. We all have different roles in trying to figure this out.

And I think we all feel a great deal of empathy for victims across this country who are expecting medicine or valuables or checks in the mail, only to find out that they do not get them. And then, of course, the people who are delivering them are under threat of being robbed, shot, stabbed, or killed.

Maybe we ought to conclude on my side with that, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank them again, and thank you, and certainly yield back for whatever statement you might have.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Mfume, thank you very much.

I hope that the witnesses who are before us today recognize that as you drew questions from Members, there still is a wide variance of people who have comments about the Postal Service.

It is my hope that you heard us say today that we have confidence in you, that we do know that the cost of the stamp and the cost of the Postal Service and the work that is being done, the day-to-day work that is done, not only by these letter carriers but mail people, is one that goes on and on and on. And they are expected to—and do—deliver, and many times in overtime and circumstances that are not beautiful.

We have circumstances like the floods that we had in Texas where those rural letter carriers in most of the instances that I am thinking of now, but also others in the Service, where the Post Office bends over backward to accommodate communities and people and hold mail and try and do the extra work that it would mean to someone who might be in stress, someone who might be searching to find a loved one who perhaps they cannot find now or have not been found, would recognize the need that that family has to gain confidence of getting their mail.

I could just go through a hundred circumstances that could happen—freezes, tornadoes, a crisis that families have—and the Post Office is embedded in much of those same types of circumstances.

And when I deal with the Post Office, I find that they want to bend over backward to help people.

So, on behalf of this Subcommittee, which has the jurisdiction for the Postal Service, I want you to know that Mr. Mfume and I have great confidence in what you have done today.

You helped us to prepare ourselves as we think about the future and, perhaps more importantly, to know that Mr. Mfume and I appreciate and respect you and the people you represent in the Postal Service.

I now will move to the end. With that, and without any objection, all Members have five legislative days within which to submit material and additional written questions for the witnesses, and they will be forwarded to the witnesses from the Subcommittee.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:38 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

