THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

PREPARED STATEMENT OF

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Before the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, US Postal Service and the Census
US House of Representatives

Good afternoon. On behalf of Chief Mark Magaw and the Prince George's County Police Department I would like to thank Chairman Farenthold, Ranking Member Lynch, and the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, US Postal Service and the Census for the opportunity to discuss the mail cover program and the role that this investigative tool plays in criminal investigations conducted by law enforcement agencies.

Let me begin by stating that the Prince George's County Police Department is in support of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Mail Covers Program. Various investigative units within the police department, including but certainly not limited to fugitive apprehension teams and narcotic enforcement units, have utilized mail covers as a supplemental investigative tool to further their cases. Mail covers are able to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies conducting criminal investigations by identifying names and addresses of entities, individuals, and locations that are associated with the subject being investigated. Fugitive teams utilize mail covers to identify individuals and locations that could lead to apprehension of the wanted subject. Narcotic investigations also benefit from mail covers by providing information regarding identification of conspirators, locations and methods used by drug organizations.

For example, during an investigation that I conducted of a drug trafficking organization that was smuggling multiple kilograms of cocaine from Miami, Florida to Prince George's County, Maryland, a mail cover was used to develop evidence on one of the fourteen conspirators. In this case, the mail cover was used to identify the names and addresses associated with a target of the investigation who was suspected of receiving the proceeds from drug sales here in Prince George's County. The suspect would then facilitate the transfer of those funds to the cocaine source of supply in Miami, Florida. This money, which the suspect was sending to the source of supply, was payment for the next shipment of cocaine. During this conspiracy, it was typical for this organization to purchase and receive ten kilograms or more of cocaine in a single shipment.

The information received from the mail cover identified a previously unknown alias that the suspect was using. This information led to the full identification of the system used to pay for the drugs. The case culminated with federal indictments and successful prosecution of this suspect and thirteen fellow conspirators which resulted in dismantling this drug trafficking organization. The mail cover was but one of numerous tools used in this case; however, the information gleaned from the mail cover was critical to the success of the investigation.

As described above, mail covers are used by law enforcement investigators when they can provide significant information that can further an investigation or provide evidence of criminal acts. The mail cover remains an important tool that continues to benefit criminal investigations by law enforcement agencies.