

Testimony of

**Mark Dimondstein
President
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**Before the
House Committee on Homeland Security**

“Protecting America’s Democracy: Ensuring Every Vote Counts”

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12:00

Good afternoon Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the committee. My name is Mark Dimondstein, and I am the President of the American Postal Workers Union. Our union represents 200,000 of the 630,000 dedicated postal workers who work to serve every community in the country each day. Thank you for the opportunity to share our union's perspective.

In this challenging time of the pandemic, our very right to vote, to access to the ballot box, will depend on vote by mail.

Yet, there has been a two-pronged assault on absentee voting, i.e. vote by mail.

First is the unfounded argument that the Service does not have the capacity to deliver mail-in ballots during this election season. Postal workers are up to the task and the Postal Service has ample resources to safely and securely accept and deliver every mail ballot it receives, provided the states who run the elections do their job.

Postal workers have proudly facilitated mail-in voting since the Civil War. We also know that the increase of mail ballots expected can be easily handled, even if all 150 million voters in the country receive and return their ballot by mail. On a daily basis, postal workers collect, sort and deliver nearly 500 million pieces of mail. During a typical holiday season, we handle as many as 3 billion cards and letters in a week. National mailings, like the recent CDC coronavirus guidelines, are routinely processed and delivered without concern.

Second is the charge that vote by mail is fraudulent. Vote-by-mail has proven to be an incredibly safe and secure method of voting. More than five states conduct their elections entirely by mail. Since 2000, more than 250 million votes have been cast by mail. In Oregon's 19 years conducting all-mail elections, more than 100 million votes have been cast with only 15 cases of voter fraud, less than one per year.

Claims that vote-by-mail is rife with fraud are not only simply false, they're also an offense to the postal workers who take our oath of office and our commitment to preserve the sanctity of

the mail seriously. It's in our DNA to treat the mail like it's our own, and handling election mail properly is even more of a sacred obligation to postal workers.

While we have certainly had our differences in his short tenure, the Postmaster General last week committed to investing resources to ensure vote-by-mail's success and has thus rejected the voter suppression tactics of some of vote-by-mail's most vocal critics.

Our union will hold the Postmaster General to his words. We, along with the other postal unions, will participate in a joint task force with management to ensure our members' expertise is central to the Postal Service's plans for ensuring that every ballot we receive is delivered safely, securely and in a timely manner.

In recent weeks, much attention has been shone on the Postmaster General's policies which have slowed down the mail. Our union has been among the most vocal critics of these changes. Just this week, we led hundreds of demonstrations across the country, demanding that the PMG's service cuts and delay-causing policies be reversed and that Congress pass the emergency COVID-related funding request made by the bipartisan Postal Board of Governors.

We will continue to press the Postal Service and Congress to ensure that the country receives the quality and speedy service it deserves and not just during this election season and not just for vitally important election mail.

But with respect to mail-in-voting in particular, our message to the many millions of voters who will rely on the Postal Service this year to access the ballot box is simple: request your ballot early and return it quickly. We have the capacity and the commitment to get your ballot where it belongs. If voters find themselves short of the time frames it takes to get a ballot returned through the mail, many states have the important option of dropping the mail ballot at secure election drop boxes.

I thank you for the opportunity to share postal workers' commitments to the democratic process with you, and I look forward to your questions.