

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**August 19, 2020**

**To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform**

**Fr: Committee Staff**

**Re: Hearing on “Protecting the Timely Delivery of Mail, Medicine, and Mail-in Ballots”**

On **Monday, August 24, 2020, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and over WebEx**, the Committee will hold a hearing with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and Postal Service Board of Governors Chairman Robert M. Duncan regarding changes at the postal service under Mr. DeJoy’s leadership.

**I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The hearing will examine operational and organizational changes at the Postal Service that have resulted in delivery delays across the country, including the delivery of critical medications, and the impact of these changes on the rights of eligible Americans to cast their votes through the mail in the November elections.

More than three months ago, as part of the Heroes Act, the House voted to approve \$25 billion in response to an urgent request from the Postal Service to continue meeting delivery standards during the coronavirus pandemic. This request was supported unanimously and on a bipartisan basis by the Postal Board of Governors—all of whom were appointed by President Trump.

On August 11, 2020, the Postal Service General Counsel and Executive Vice President, Thomas J. Marshall, sent two letters to Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney. The first admitted that the Postal Service now lacks the funding necessary to fulfill its core mission. His letter included this stark warning: “We are currently unable to balance our costs with available funding sources to fulfill both our universal service mission and other legal obligations.” His letter went on to outline operational changes that the Postmaster General was implementing in the name of cost-cutting.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Thomas J. Marshall, General Counsel and Executive Vice President, U.S. Postal Service, to Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Aug. 11, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/documents/USPS%20to%20COR%2008-11-20%20re%20Operational%20Changes.pdf>).

The second letter addressed issues related to election mail. In this letter, the General Counsel asserted that “the Postal Service remains fully committed to fulfilling our role in the electoral process by doing everything we can to handle and deliver Election Mail, including ballots, in a timely manner consistent with our operational standards.”<sup>2</sup>

On August 14, 2020, Chairwoman Maloney, along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, and the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Committees with jurisdiction over the Postal Service and federal elections sent a letter to Mr. DeJoy requesting information and documents by August 21, 2020.<sup>3</sup>

On August 18, 2020, Mr. DeJoy issued a statement suspending many of his recent changes, stating: “To avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail, I am suspending these initiatives until after the election is concluded.”<sup>4</sup> It is unclear whether other possible changes—including how the Postal Service will prioritize election mail—will continue, and whether other previously-enacted changes will be reversed.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform has both oversight and legislative jurisdiction over the Postal Service. House Rule X, clause 1(n) assigns to the Committee legislative jurisdiction over the “Postal service generally, including transportation of the mails.”<sup>5</sup>

## **II. WITNESSES**

### **Mr. Louis DeJoy**

Postmaster General, United States Postal Service

### **The Honorable Robert M. Duncan**

Chairman, United States Postal Service Board of Governors

Staff contacts: Aaron Blacksberg and Candyce Phoenix at (202) 225-5051.

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from Thomas J. Marshall, General Counsel and Executive Vice President, U.S. Postal Service, to Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Aug. 11, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/documents/USPS%20to%20COR%2008-11-20%20re%20Election%20Prep.pdf>).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi et al., to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, U.S. Postal Service (Aug. 14, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-08-14.Pelosi%20et%20al.%20to%20DeJoy-PMG%20re%20Election%20Prep.pdf>).

<sup>4</sup> United States Postal Service, *Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Statement* (Aug. 18, 2020) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/0818-postmaster-general-louis-dejoy-statement.htm>).

<sup>5</sup> House rule X, clause 1(n).