

GERALD E. CONNOLLY

11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA
2238 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1492

FAIRFAX OFFICE:

4115 ANNANDALE ROAD
SUITE 103
ANNANDALE, VA 22003
(703) 256-3071

PRINCE WILLIAM OFFICE:

2241-D TACKETT'S MILL DRIVE
WOODBIDGE, VA 22192
(571) 408-4407

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEES:

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ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER POLICY

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

August 13, 2020

The Honorable Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General
U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington VA, 22209-2020

Dear Ms. Whitcomb:

As you are aware, I and other Members of Congress are disturbed by recent steps taken by Postmaster General (PMG) Louis DeJoy to restructure the Postal Service.¹ The timing of his proposals — amidst a global pandemic and just weeks before a contentious presidential election that will rely on the Postal Service to deliver unprecedented volumes of mail-in-ballots — constitutes a deliberate attempt to use the Postal Service to stifle democracy and influence an election.

It remains unclear whether the Postmaster General is complying with all statutory, regulatory, and administrative processes related to implementation of his drastic changes to nationwide operations and service delivery standards. I believe he is not. I, therefore, write to ask that you perform a rapid review of the statutory and regulatory compliance of Mr. DeJoy's recent actions.

In recent weeks, it has been reported Mr. DeJoy has:

- Removed employee access to overtime, despite clear evidence of a workforce shortage caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- Told employees to leave late-arriving mail behind, changing years of Postal Service practice;
- Introduced a reorganization plan without providing any evidence or justification for it;
- Announced plans to request authority for a hiring freeze, again in the midst of a global pandemic that is prompting workforce shortages; and
- Announced plans to consolidate regions without clarity as to what problem these changes would solve.²

¹ *Organizational Structure*, U.S. Postal Service, memo from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to Officers (August 7, 2020)

² *Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's Opening Remarks for the USPS Board of Governors August 7 Meeting*, U.S. Postal Service (Aug. 7, 2020) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national->

Mr. DeJoy has not taken the necessary steps to inform and include overseers and regulators in any of these actions.

The Postal Service Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the Postal Service to file for and request an Advisory Opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) on major changes to postal services within a “reasonable” time period before instituting proposed changes.³ Despite anecdotal evidence that changes to overtime access and delivery practices at the U.S. Postal Service are having negative effects on postal operations and service delivery standards across the country, and despite the sweeping nature of the reorganization the PMG recently proposed to the Postal Service Board of Governors, the PMG has not requested an Advisory Opinion from the PRC.⁴

In many high-profile and critically important cases, inspectors general have opted to generate so-called “flash reports,” which are shorter, rapid examinations that provide critical information to Congress and stakeholders in real time, allowing for timely responses to flagrant violations and other concerns.⁵ In our letter to you on August 7, 2020, we asked that you examine whether Mr. DeJoy’s actions to date are “consistent with the Postal Service’s internal policies and procedures and applicable legal requirements, including requirement governing consultation with the U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission and postal employees and customers.”⁶ I respectfully request that you conduct this examination as a flash report. If Mr. DeJoy has not followed appropriate processes, we need to act immediately to remedy his error.

Your office has previously determined that the Postal Service workforce is “facing labor shortages as employees become sick, fear getting sick, or need to take time off to provide dependent care.”⁷ Your report continued “[m]anaging postal operations with an insufficient number of workers could potentially lead to delays in mail processing and delivery in some instances.”⁸ It is unconscionable that the Postmaster General would take steps to intentionally

[releases/2020/0807-pmg-bog-meeting-comments.htm](#)); Postal Service Memos Detail “Difficult” Changes, Including Slower Mail Delivery, Washington Post (July 14, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/](#)); and Postal Service Overhauls Leadership as Democrats Press for Investigation of Mail Delays, Washington Post (August 7, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/07/postal-service-investigation-dejoy/](#)).

³ 39 U.S.C. 3661.

⁴ *Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s Opening Remarks for the USPS Board of Governors August 7 Meeting*, U.S. Postal Service (Aug. 7, 2020) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/0807-pmg-bog-meeting-comments.htm>).

⁵ See, for example, *Inspectors General Brief Committee on Oversight of the Federal Government’s Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic*, House Committee on Oversight and Reform (April 28, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/inspectors-general-brief-committee-on-oversight-of-the-federal-government-s>).

⁶ *Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren and Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney, et al, to The Honorable Tammy L. Whitcomb*, Inspector General of the U.S. Postal Service (August 7, 2020) (online at www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020.08.07%20Letter%20to%20Postal%20Service%20IG.pdf).

⁷ *Top Challenges Facing Federal Agencies: COVID-19 Emergency Relief and Response Efforts*, U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (June 17, 2020) (online at <https://www.uspsoig.gov/document/top-challenges-facing-federal-agencies-covid-19-emergency-relief-and-response-efforts>).

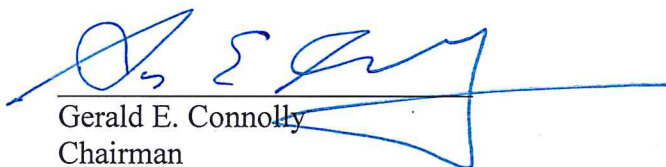
⁸ *Id.*

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reduce the hours of Postal Service employees at a time when it is clear that the workforce is the solution to labor shortages at the agency. These steps make no sense, and only fuel my fears that the Postmaster General is intentionally infusing chaos and disarray into the Postal Service just weeks before a presidential election in which the use of mail-in-balloting is anticipated to skyrocket. We need to make sure overseers and regulators are allowed their due diligence before irreparable harm is done. We need a flash report to inform our urgent work.

If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-1492.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations