

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General, United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Room 10300
Washington, DC 20260-2200

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We write today about our concerns about delays in letter and parcel deliveries in Illinois and across the country during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) plays a vital role in our fight against the Coronavirus pandemic. Recent operational changes, made at your direction, have undermined the ability of USPS to carry out its mission during this critical time. We urge you to immediately take corrective action to ensure the timely delivery of letters and parcels in Illinois and across the country during this critical time.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has upended daily life across the country, millions of Americans with underlying health conditions, including cancer, heart conditions, and other illnesses, have remained at home to avoid possible infection. The delivery of medications, home health equipment, nonperishable goods, and other vital mail is critical to the well-being of millions of Americans. As a result, delays in USPS delivery can have life-threatening implications.

Nationwide, there have been reports of critical mail being delivered days behind schedule. In Illinois, we are receiving thousands of reports of mail delay across the state, from Chicago to Cairo. For example, there have been reports of individuals going up to two weeks without mail delivery in some Chicago neighborhoods.

Reports indicate that the recent operational changes made at USPS are directly contributing to these delays. Two recent memos, sent to Postal Service employees in July, acknowledges that employees “may see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor or docks, which is not typical” and an announcement prohibiting the use of overtime to complete delivery rounds. These policy changes, in addition to a reduction in mail sorting and processing hours, are contributing to an unacceptable delay in mail delivery during a historic public health crisis.

As stay at home orders and social distancing have been implemented in Illinois and across the country to control the spread of COVID-19, the prompt delivery of vital medications, home health equipment, and goods has become increasingly important. In recent months, USPS has seen an increase in parcel volume anywhere from 20 percent to over 80 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels. Limiting processing hours and overtime when the timely home delivery of medication, medical equipment, and other goods is more important than ever to help limit the spread of the Coronavirus is simply irresponsible.

It is also concerning that we are seeing significant delays in the delivery of mail when we are less than 100 days from a national election where mail-in ballots delivered by USPS will be vital to ensuring people, of all political persuasions, can safely exercise their right to vote while following public health experts' recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Millions of Americans rely on, now more than ever, the hard work of the USPS for the delivery of their medications, home health equipment, nonperishable food, ballots, and other vital pieces of mail. As the head of the U.S. Postal Service, we expect you to take immediate corrective action to reduce delays and ensure families receive their mail in a timely manner.

We look forward to your response on how your office will work to eliminate these delays as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Daniel W. Lipinski
United States Representative

/s/ Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States Representative

/s/ Lauren Underwood
United States Representative

/s/ Bill Foster
United States Representative

/s/ Jesús G. "Chuy" García
United States Representative

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative

/s/ Bradley S. Schneider
United States Representative

/s/ Danny K. Davis
United States Representative

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative

/s/ Mike Quigley
United States Representative

/s/ Robin L. Kelly
United States Representative

/s/ Cheri Bustos
United States Representative

/s/ Sean Casten
United States Representative