

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 17, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Room 10804
Washington, DC 20260-3500

Dear Mr. Postmaster General:

We write to express our concerns about recent changes to U.S. Postal Service (USPS) operations and the harmful consequences on mail delivery and services for residents and businesses in the State of Rhode Island.

The dedicated men and women of the USPS provide essential services established by the U.S. Constitution. The agency guarantees timely and reliable delivery to all addresses in the country. The current pandemic has further highlighted the importance of this service as people and businesses are relying on USPS services to stay connected with friends and family, and for deliveries of medicine, food, and other necessities. Additionally, due to the current health crisis, USPS will be utilized by millions of Americans to exercise their right to vote in November's election.

As such, it was particularly troubling when it was brought to our attention by the RI Chapter of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) that the USPS, without prior consultation, informed the NALC of a new delivery initiative test – Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS). The pilot program is underway in Pawtucket, Rhode Island and reportedly has severely curtailed the ability of letter carriers to deliver the mail on a consistent and timely basis. We have also been told that other postal branches in the state have decided to implement this program, or a hybrid of the ESAS, resulting in limitations of mail delivery.

Normally, mail is sorted in the morning and then letter carriers take all the mail for the day out to their route for delivery. At times carriers have to wait for mail to arrive from dispatch, meaning they start their route later than anticipated. The route is completed when all the day's mail has been delivered. This guarantees timely delivery and good customer service for homes and businesses. Under this new initiative, letter carriers are instructed to leave without all the day's mail, do their route, and then return to the branch to sort and file that morning's remaining mail for the next day. Therefore, mail is delayed on a recurring basis with an increasing backlog. It would appear that the ESAS is designed to restrict overtime for letter carriers by not allowing them to deliver all of the day's mail, regardless of the number of shift hours required to accomplish that goal.

Any attempt to undermine the USPS is unacceptable. Unilateral changes to services could harm all Americans who rely on the services provided by the USPS. Additionally, the hardworking men and women of the USPS have been on the front line providing critical services to keep postal operations functioning during this pandemic. Undermining workplace conditions and rules without input or oversight is an affront to these essential workers, many of whom are veterans.

We urge you to suspend these harmful operational changes and turn your attention to supporting the mission of the USPS and its workers in providing an invaluable service to the American people and businesses.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.


Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



James Langevin
United States Congressman



David Cicilline
United States Congressman