

Opening Statement

Hearing Examining the Finances and Operations of the United States Postal Service During
COVID-19 and Upcoming Elections
August 21, 2020
Ranking Member Gary Peters (D-MI)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeJoy, I appreciate you joining us today. As you can imagine, we have a lot of questions for you.

We are in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic. We are experiencing one of our nation's worst health and economic crises. Now we are facing a mail crisis, and we are just months away from an election where we expect record numbers of Americans to vote by mail.

For many communities in Michigan and across the country, the Postal Service has always been a lifeline. Especially for the communities private carriers won't deliver to.

Whether folks are receiving important medications, financial documents, critical home supplies, or simply trying to stay in touch with their loved ones, the Postal Service has always delivered. But Mr. DeJoy you have not.

For more than two centuries, Americans have been able to count on the Postal Service. But – in less than two months as Postmaster General – you have undermined one of our nation's most trusted institutions and wreaked havoc on families, veterans, seniors, rural communities and people across our country.

The operational changes you implemented, without consulting with your customers or the public, have caused significant delays. Delays that have hurt people across the nation. Delays that come at a time when people depend on reliable service now more than ever.

In July, I started hearing reports about how severely your changes were slowing down the mail.

I asked you for answers – but it wasn't until I launched an investigation that you admitted you had directed these changes yourself.

And despite multiple requests, it took you more than one month to respond to me directly. I'm still not satisfied with your explanation.

You have brushed off these delays, calling them an "inevitable" side effect of your vision for the Postal Service.

Let me tell you about the people who are forced to bear the brunt of your decisions.

Beth from Ada, Michigan works for a company that produces educational materials for health care workers.

Beth's company started seeing serious delivery problems and switched to overnight shipping, which has almost doubled their shipping costs. Between these delays and the pandemic, they have had to layoff multiple employees to help absorb these costs.

Mary from Redford said her daughter has been getting her epilepsy medication through the mail, usually in 3 to 4 days. Because of changes you ordered, her latest refill shipped on July 20th, and took 9 days to be delivered.

When Mary's daughter realized the medication wasn't going to arrive on time, she tried to ration what few pills she had left. As a result, she suffered seizures and was transported to the hospital.

These are just a few of my constituents who shared their stories as part of my investigation.

I have received more than 7,500 reports of delays from people in Michigan and across the country in just two weeks. They have written to me about skipping doses of their medication, and their small businesses losing their customers or having to layoff employees. All because of changes you directed.

Mr. Chairman, I also move to enter into the hearing record an update on what my investigation is finding.

Mr. DeJoy, your decisions have cost Americans their health, their time, their livelihoods and their peace of mind. You owe them an apology for the harm you have caused – and you owe all of us clear answers.

The country is anxious about whether the damage you have inflicted so far can be quickly reversed and what other plans you have in store that could further disrupt or damage reliable, timely delivery from the Postal Service.

If you plan to continue pursuing these kinds of changes, I think my colleagues, and many of our constituents, will continue to question whether you are the right person to lead this indispensable public institution.