

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 5, 2021

Mr. Louis DeJoy  
Postmaster General  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

We write to share our concerns regarding the United States Postal Service's (USPS) recent changes to first-class mail services. These changes, a part of the Delivering for America Strategic Plan, will directly affect customers with longer delivery times and increased costs. While we respect your desire to overcome budget shortfalls and the importance of the long-term fiscal stability of the USPS, we are concerned that modified service standards will disproportionately affect those for whom the Postal Service is a lifeline—the elderly, disabled people, veterans, and rural and Tribal communities. To date, we believe that your justification of these changes and the associated impacts has been insufficient.<sup>1</sup>

As of October 1, 2021, first class mail delivery times went from two or three days to between two and five days, depending on the distance.<sup>2</sup> This means that mail delivery is slower now than in the 1970s; the USPS should be striving towards improving service standards, not moving back 50 years.<sup>3</sup> This lengthened delivery time will directly affect customers and potentially disrupt their use of the USPS as an essential service. Though this change has already gone into effect, the USPS has offered little insight into the impacts on customers, particularly those disadvantaged groups who rely on the Postal Service the most.

The USPS provides an essential service to all Americans, but disadvantaged groups including the elderly, disabled people, veterans, and rural and Tribal communities rely even more on timely and affordable services from the USPS. These groups use the USPS to fill prescriptions, pay bills, file taxes, vote, and conduct other essential business. Our constituents are concerned that longer delivery times will result in late payment fees, days without

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<sup>1</sup> “PRC Issues Advisory Opinion on USPS Proposal to Change Service Standards for First-Class Package Service Nationwide: Plan Lacks Demonstrable Evidence | Postal Regulatory Commission,” Postal Regulatory Commission, September 29, 2021, <https://www.prc.gov/press-releases/prc-issues-advisory-opinion-usps-proposal-change-service-standards-first-class>.

“Postal Service Response to PRC Advisory Opinion,” USPS, July 20, 2021, <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/statements/072021-usps-response-to-prc-advisory-opinion.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Bogage, “USPS Is about to Charge You More for Slower Mail. Here's Why.,” The Washington Post (WP Company, October 1, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/10/01/usps-slowdown-prices-faq/>.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Steidler, “Repeating Failure: Mail Standards Degraded for the Second Time in Seven Years,” Lexington Institute (Lexington Institute, September 30, 2021), <https://www.lexingtoninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Repeating-Failure-Mail-Standards-Degraded-for-the-Second-Time-in-Seven-Years.pdf>.

medication, and other serious consequences. Particularly for rural and Tribal communities, the USPS is a service that cannot be replaced or supplemented by other providers. As the federal representatives of many of the aforementioned communities, we ask that you provide a thorough and transparent assessment of the impact of service standard changes on our constituents.

We ask that you respond to the following questions regarding the service standard changes to first class mail services no later than November 5, 2021:

1. Has USPS conducted a thorough review of the impact of service standard changes on the elderly, disabled people, veterans, or rural and Tribal communities? If so, please provide an explanation of the expected impacts on these communities.
  - a. If not, does the USPS intend to track the impact of the changes as implemented on these groups?
2. Does USPS plan to monitor the impact of service standard changes on the overall goals of the Delivering for America Strategic Plan? If the changes do not help to achieve the desired goals, does USPS plan to return to the previous service standards?
3. Will the delivery times for distances over 930 miles disproportionately affect rural areas?
4. Will the service standard changes disproportionately affect any specific states or regions?
5. Did the USPS provide a more thorough response to the Postal Regulatory Commission's recommendations dated July 20, 2021?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

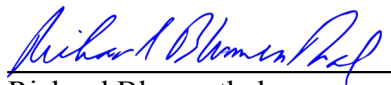
Sincerely,



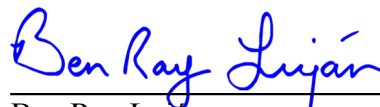
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator