

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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Ranking Member Jamie Raskin Committee on Oversight and Accountability Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery Hearing on “Oversight of the U.S. Postal Service” December 10, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Comer, and thank you, Mr. DeJoy and Ms. Hull, for being with us here today to discuss the state of the U.S. Postal Service.

When the Continental Congress established the first Post Office of the United States, it was more than just a horseback-driven system for sending personal letters—the Post Office created the communication network that not only made the Revolutionary Committees of Correspondence possible and integrated the strategies of military commanders with public servants and it established the national postal roads transportation network. The Post Office also promoted the free press by ensuring the very low-cost distribution of national and international news to the public at special rates. A luminary no less striking than Benjamin Franklin, the inventor of the electric lightning rod, the lending library and the volunteer fire department, became the first Postmaster General to improve delivery routes and speed up service to connect the new nation.

249 years later, the Postal Service is still an essential public institution. Its mission is set forth in the Constitution and laid out more specifically in federal code, which charges the Postal Service with: “provid[ing] prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.”

The Postal Service was ranked the most essential institution operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. People rely on the Postal Service to send and receive critical items—including bank statements and legal notices, life-saving prescription medicines, and notifications of data breaches.

The Postal Service can reach every address in the United States—that is 167 million residences, businesses, and Postal Office Boxes. Its value is essential to the whole economy and society—especially to Americans in some of our nation’s hardest-to-reach rural places. Efficiency, reliability, and stability of the Postal Service are critical to meeting the needs of the public and required for ensuring its long-term survival.

The Postal Service has been operating in an unsustainable manner for a long time. When President Trump appointed Postmaster DeJoy in 2020, the Postal Service was in dire need of reform. Postmaster DeJoy attempted to meet this challenge by launching the ten-year Delivering for America plan. Postmaster DeJoy has stated repeatedly that the Postal Service “must operate in many ways like a private business.”

Congress passed the bipartisan Postal Service Reform Act in 2022. The law helped the Postal Service avoid imminent financial collapse and gave Postmaster DeJoy runway to implement his plan for long-term success. The law helped the Postal Service progress toward graduating from the Government Accountability Office's High Risk List, which ranks government operations most vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement. Getting off that list is indeed hard to accomplish.

Despite these bipartisan efforts, it seems that Postmaster DeJoy has failed to use all this discretion and resources effectively. His changes to the delivery network have resulted in a disastrous decline in on-time delivery in many regions. Bipartisan concerns about DeJoy's planned changes prompted a pause in the activation of mail processing and delivery hubs through the end of the election and holiday season.

The Postmaster General anticipated some bumps in service, but he said these delays would be temporary and all in service of getting the Postal Service to break-even financially. Three years into his plan, however, the financial condition is astoundingly bad and much worse than all initial projections. Postmaster DeJoy projected in his original Delivering for America plan that the Postal Service would reach break-even by 2023 or 2024. Instead, the Postal Service's net loss of \$950 million from operations in fiscal year 2022 increased to a whopping \$9.5 billion net loss in fiscal year 2024. That is a 900-percent increase in the Postal Service's losses in a two-year span.

Postmaster DeJoy's Delivering for America plan also changed delivery standards for First-Class Mail from 2-3 days to 3-5 days. Mr. DeJoy claimed that the new standards would make it possible for the Postal Service to reach its goal of 95% on-time mail delivery nationwide. Yet today, not a single one of the 50 Postal Service Districts is meeting the Postal Service's self-designed 95% service standard.

Meanwhile, the Postal Service increased prices for mail and packages in July. Another price increase for packages will go into effect in January 2025.

In other words, under the DeJoy plan, Americans are paying higher prices for even worse service.

More than three years into Delivering for America's implementation, with more than 150 ongoing projects initiated to meet the Postmaster's goals, customers are still seeing a decline in mail delivery service and they're paying higher costs for it. The Postmaster General's plan is not working. But Mr. DeJoy continues to drive everything in the wrong direction.

In the last month, the Postal Service announced its intention to lower service performance targets for fiscal year 2025 by as much as 15% among certain First-Class Mail products—the lowest performance targets ever, excluding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. DeJoy's leadership of the Postal Service is an alarming example of what may come in Trump's second term—sticking to the MAGA playbook of treating essential government functions with cavalier recklessness and ignoring the differences between a private sector company and a public good.

I do want to take a moment to recognize and applaud the valiant efforts of postal management and employees to deliver election mail during the 2024 election season. I also want to commend Inspector General Hull for the Office's exceptional audit work during the election season to ensure the Postal Service had ample resources and insights to promptly deliver election mail and make adjustments where they were needed.

When the Postal Service meets its mission, everyone benefits. And my colleagues and I all want the Postal Service to work for our constituents and communities. As the Postal Service works to build a resilient operation, it must fulfill its obligations to the American people, and ensure that we all have reliable mail delivery as a pillar of a successful economy and society.

I look forward to this discussion, and I yield back.

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