

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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June 6, 2025

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We write to request an investigation into progress made on the U.S. Postal Service (Postal Service) and U.S. Postal Inspection Service's (USPIS) Joint Project Safe Delivery Initiative. We remain concerned about the safety of Postal Service employees and Postal Service facilities, and believe that as we pass the two-year anniversary of this initiative, an outside evaluation is necessary and prudent to provide transparency and accountability about the efforts made thus far.

According to previous Government Accountability Office (GAO) reporting, serious crimes against postal employees and facilities doubled from 2019 to 2023, increasing from 600 to almost 1,200 cases. Within this increase, robberies of postal workers, including letter carriers, increased almost seven-fold. GAO's review of crimes against the Postal Service found that these robberies often involved firearms and targeted universal arrow keys, which Postal Service employees use to access mailboxes, including collection boxes that contain the mail of multiple households.¹ Concerningly, the number of arrow keys stolen from mail carriers has risen sharply from 132 in 2021 to 418, nearly three times that, in 2023.² Increases in assaults on Postal employees were also accompanied by increases in mail theft. From 2019 to 2022, reports of high-volume mail theft increased by 87%.³

Amidst this increase in postal carrier assaults and mail theft, the Postal Service and USPIS launched the Joint Project Safe Delivery Initiative on May 11, 2023. To reduce letter carrier robberies and mail theft, the Postal Service and USPIS pledged to install 12,000 new high security blue collection boxes nationwide, focusing first on high security risk areas, and to

¹ Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Postal Service: Inspection Service Should Document Its Law Enforcement Workforce Decision-Making Processes* (May 29, 2024) (online at www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106497).

² *Man Allegedly Threatened Mailman in Virginia Beach with Gun to Steal USPS Arrow Key*, WTKR (Oct. 7, 2024) (online at www.wtkr.com/investigations/man-allegedly-threatened-mailman-in-virginia-beach-with-gun-to-steal-usps-arrow-key).

³ *Why Mail Theft Is on the Rise*, Time (July 17, 2024) (online at <https://time.com/6999321/mail-theft-rising/>).

replace 49,000 outdated arrow key locks with electronic locks that require multi-factor authentication to open.⁴ Project Safe Delivery plans also include efforts to educate employees on safety, mail theft, and arrow key security, improve collaboration with law enforcement partners, combat change of address fraud, and address problems with counterfeit postage.⁵

In January of this year, the Postal Service and USPIS claimed a 27% reduction in letter carrier robberies and more than 2,400 arrests associated with implementation of Project Safe Delivery.⁶ In an April 2024 briefing to Congress, Postal Service officials shared that they have deployed over 23,000 high security collection boxes and installed over 40,000 new electronic arrow key locks. This news represents encouraging progress in removing easy incentives for thieves and criminals to target hardworking postal carriers. However, amidst a record of failure and mismanagement in addressing crimes against postal employees, an outside review is needed to take an accurate accounting of where progress has been made, where more needs to be done, and how to set Project Safe Delivery back on the right track if necessary.

On May 9, 2025, the Postal Service Board of Governors announced that they have chosen former FedEx board member and Waste Management Corporation CEO David Steiner as Postmaster General.⁷ It is imperative that incoming Postal leadership understands the current state of mail theft and fraud so that they may implement nonpartisan, data-informed solutions at the Postal Service.

This Committee is committed to protecting Postal employees, combatting mail theft, and ensuring a safe and effective delivery of U.S. mail. For these reasons, we ask that GAO examine:

1. The current state of postal-related crimes, including frequency and any emerging trends;
2. The implementation status of Project Safe Delivery's components, including new secure collection boxes, replacement of arrow locks with electronic locks, and employee and external educational campaigns, and how implementation of the initiative varies by region and/or geography; and

⁴ U.S. Postal Service, *USPS, Postal Inspection Service Roll Out Expanded Crime Prevention Measures To Crack Down on Mail Theft, Enhance Employee Safety and Strengthen Consumer Protections* (May 12, 2023) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2023/0512-usps-postal-inspection-service-roll-out-expanded-measures-to-crack-down-on-mail-theft.htm>).

⁵ U.S. Postal Service, *Project Safe Delivery: An Initiative to Combat Mail Theft and Improve Employee Safety* (Jan. 2024) (online at <https://about.usps.com/who/government-relations/assets/project-safe-delivery-postal-101.pdf>).

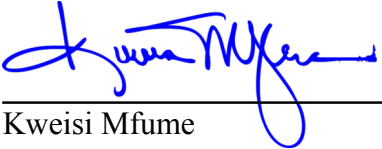
⁶ U.S. Postal Service, *USPS and Postal Inspection Service Highlight Success of Project Safe Delivery* (Jan. 23, 2025) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/local-releases/ma/2025/0123-usps-postal-inspection-service-highlight-success-of%20project-safe-delivery.htm>).

⁷ U.S. Postal Service, *Postal Service Board of Governors appoints David Steiner to be 76th Postmaster General and CEO of the United States Postal Service* (May 9, 2025) (online at <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2025/0509-usps-bog-appoints-david-steiner-to-be-76th-pmg-and-ceo-of-usps.htm>).

3. How the Postal Service and USPS are measuring the progress and effects of Project Safe Delivery on postal related crime, and to what extent they are achieving their goals and targets.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. Please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Kweisi Mfume
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on
Government Operations



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Pete Sessions, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations