



NASS
National Association
of Secretaries of State



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of
STATE ELECTION DIRECTORS

September 11, 2024

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster DeJoy:

On behalf of state and local election officials in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories, we write to express our ongoing concerns about the United States Postal Service's (USPS) performance as we approach the November 5, 2024 General Election. Over the course of the last year, election officials across the country have raised serious questions about processing facility operations, lost or delayed election mail, and front-line training deficiencies impacting USPS's ability to deliver election mail in a timely and accurate manner. Despite repeated engagement with USPS Election and Political Mail headquarters staff and state/regional Managers of Customer Relations, we have not seen improvement or concerted efforts to remediate our concerns. In fact, many of the issues raised by election officials are echoed in the recent findings of the USPS Office of Inspector General Audit, Election Mail Readiness for the 2024 General Election.

Inconsistent Training for USPS Staff

Election officials nationwide report USPS staff, from Managers of Customer Relations to local postal carriers, are uninformed about USPS policies around election mail. This has led to inconsistent guidance given to election officials, as well as ballots being deliberately held to remediate erroneous billing issues, significantly delayed, or otherwise improperly processed. In some cases, this has resulted in mis-delivery of ballots such that voters are disenfranchised.

USPS has more than 600,000 employees, and election officials recognize the challenges associated with training such a large staff. The frequency and widespread distribution of training-related issues, however, make it clear these are not one-off mistakes or a problem with specific facilities. Instead, it demonstrates a pervasive lack of understanding and enforcement of USPS policies among its employees.

Exceptionally Long Delivery Times

Election officials have engaged in rigorous efforts over the last several years to emphasize the importance of voters requesting and returning ballots by mail early,



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especially considering the changes to First-Class delivery standards codified by the Delivering for America plan. In nearly every state, however, local election officials are receiving timely postmarked ballots well after Election Day and well outside the three to five business days USPS claims as the First-Class delivery standard. For example, election officials in multiple states report receiving anywhere from dozens to hundreds of ballots 10 or more days after postmark. There is no amount of proactive communication election officials can do to account for USPS's inability to meet their own service delivery timelines.

Increase in Mail Returned as Undeliverable

Election officials report mail sent to voters is being marked as undeliverable at higher than usual rates, even in cases where a voter is known not to have moved. This has affected a range of election mail, including informational mailers about critical election information and voter address confirmation cards, as well as ballots. In other cases, ballots sent to election offices are being returned to the voter with the election office address marked as undeliverable. This is happening nationwide despite mail piece design approval from USPS Mail Piece Design Analysts.

Election mail returned to an election office as undeliverable could initiate the voter registration list maintenance process consistent with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993. As a result, a voter may be moved to the inactive voter registration list and could be required to take additional action to verify their address to participate in the election. Thus, the increase in undeliverable mail raises two significant issues: (1) the potential disenfranchisement of voters whose ballots are not delivered to them or to their election office, and (2) putting eligible voters on the path to having their voter registration record canceled.

We do appreciate the steps that will be taken by USPS as part of the Extraordinary Measures procedures immediately before and after the November general election, though we would suggest beginning the implementation of Extraordinary Measures at least a month prior to the November election. Important election mailings are sent year-round, however, and lasting improvements to election mail processing require continuous attention and emphasis. Temporary measures will not be sufficient to address the persistent issues highlighted by election officials.

State and local election officials need a committed partner in USPS. We implore you to take immediate and tangible corrective action to address the ongoing performance issues with USPS election mail service. Failure to do so will risk limiting voter participation and trust in the election process.



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We look forward to seeing your plans and sharing them with election officials as soon as possible. They can be shared with Leslie Reynolds, NASS Executive Director (reynolds@nass.org), and Amy Cohen, NASED Executive Director (acohen@nased.org). Please reach out if we may provide any assistance or feedback during this process.

Sincerely,

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CC:

- Amber McReynolds, Vice Chair, USPS Board of Governors
- Ron Strohman, Member, USPS Board of Governors
- Adrienne Marshall, Director, Election and Political Mail, USPS
- Steve Monteith, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President, USPS
- Brendan Donahue, Assistant Inspector in Charge – Criminal Investigations Group, US Postal Inspection Service
- Geoff Guska, Assistant Special Agent in Charge - Criminal Intelligence Program Coordination Division, USPS Office of the Inspector General
- Caitlin Durkovich, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor for Resilience and Response, National Security Council
- Justin Vail, Special Assistant to the President for Democracy and Civic Participation, Domestic Policy Council
- Ben Hovland, Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- Don Palmer, Vice Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
- U.S. House Committee on House Administration
- U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
- U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
- U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
- U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary

LETTER SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL