

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 11, 2024

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 10300
Washington D.C. 202160

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We write to express our concerns regarding major delays in delivery of mail by the United States Postal Service (USPS) sorted at the Hazelwood, Missouri Sorting and Delivery Center, which serves Eastern Missouri. We request the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct an audit on the facility to determine why mail delivery is delayed and inconsistent for many of our constituents. Additionally, we request clarification on a number of glaring shortcomings by USPS. These include the delayed delivery of absentee ballots and the recently proposed plan to further delay delivery for rural areas.

Small businesses rely on the Postal Service to deliver time-sensitive legal documents. Seniors in rural Missouri rely on the Postal Service to deliver life-saving medicine. Our constituents have been assessed late fees on bills due to the major delays at mail distribution centers. People even rely on USPS to exercise their constitutional right to vote. By failing to live up to the agency's primary mission, the USPS is actively putting our constituents at risk of losing their homes, vehicles, lives, and Constitutionally protected freedoms.

Despite claims that USPS is "unaware of any current service issues, disruptions or delays in... Missouri" some absentee ballots in Missouri postmarked in July were delivered too late to be counted in the August 5, 2024, primary election. It is simply unacceptable that Missourians were deprived of their right to vote because of incompetence by USPS leadership. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about reports that USPS has not effectively engaged with local election authorities as it has in prior elections and that this lack of communication resulted in USPS not realizing these failures until it was too late.

Because of these failures, we have grave concerns with USPS's Notice of Pre-Filing Conference before the Postal Regulatory Commission entitled: *Operational and Service Standards Changes to Meet Statutory Requirements for Reliable, Efficient, High Quality Service and Financial Sustainability Through an Integrated Mail and Package Network*. Despite the aspirational name, the changes proposed by USPS, particularly the Regional Transportation Optimization (RTO) initiative, threaten to further delay delivery times for rural Americans. In effect, we believe these changes would effectively create a two-tiered mail system, wherein rural Americans are treated like second class citizens and subject to even more egregious delays.

The bottom line is that our constituents depend on USPS and cannot afford these continued failures. Submitting a plan to further delay mail deliveries for rural Americans while continuing

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to increase postage rates because USPS leadership cannot effectively run their operation is totally unacceptable. Quite simply, Americans don't want to pay more for worse service.

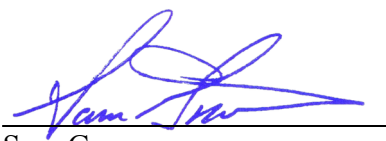
While we are all incredibly thankful for the vital service that our letter carriers provide, we are concerned that their hands are tied because of unacceptable failures occurring at Sorting and Delivery Centers due to ineffective USPS leadership. It defies common sense that there is anyone in USPS leadership that can still honestly believe the best path forward is to further consolidate operations at these failing Sorting and Delivery Centers without any real plan to improve service.

That is why we request answers to the following questions by October 1, 2024:

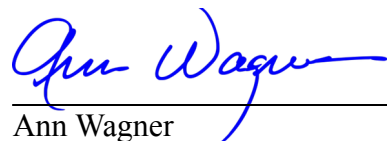
1. Specifically, how does the USPS plan to address Eastern Missouri's unreliable mail delivery and major delays?
2. Will the USPS OIG commit to conducting an audit for postal operations at the Hazelwood, MO Distribution and Processing Center, as well as operations throughout Eastern Missouri?
3. Please reply with a detailed plan to complete this audit and an expected timeline.
4. Please reply with a report on absentee ballot delivery issues in this recent election and a plan to ensure this does not happen in the future.
 - a. Please include a detailed strategy on how USPS will effectively engage with local election authorities in Missouri to prevent similar failures in the November 5, 2024 general election.
5. Please reply with how this recent proposal to the Postal Regulatory Commission will affect postal delivery operations in each post office in our districts.
 - a. Please include a current list of pickup times at each post office location in our district, noting every post office where USPS is considering reducing service, and the expected delays that would be imposed on Missourians served by these post offices.

We look forward to your timely response to our questions.

Sincerely,




Sam Graves
Member of Congress

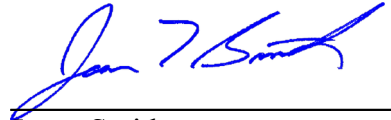


Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

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Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



Jason Smith
Member of Congress