

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2020

Mr. Louis DeJoy  
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.  
Room 4012  
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. DeJoy:

In your three months as U.S. Postmaster General, you have made detrimental operational and structural changes to the U.S. Postal Service. After facing criticism from members of Congress, states, and the public as well as lawsuits from multiple state attorneys general you announced the reversal of some—but not all—of these policies. Damage from your decisions has already been done as Americans continue to experience potentially life-threatening delays in the delivery of prescription medications. These delays will continue to disproportionately harm the same individuals who are most at risk during the COVID-19 crisis, including seniors, people with chronic conditions, and people with disabilities.

While we hope that your recent policy reversals will curtail some of the harmful effects and delays we have seen, we continue to have grave concerns regarding widespread delays in the delivery of critical medications that millions of Americans rely upon every day. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now more important than ever for Americans to have safe and timely access to their medications from their homes. For years, Americans have entrusted the Postal Service to deliver essential goods—yet during this public health crisis, a number of Americans continue to await needed medications that are lost or delayed in the mail.

The Postal Service is an essential public institution that must uphold its duty to serve every community. Your recently implemented changes pose an unacceptable threat and continue to have a devastating effect on communities that rely on consistent access to medication through the mail. We have received numerous reports from seniors about delays in receiving their prescriptions through the mail, leaving some without life-sustaining medication for days. Others have been forced to obtain emergency prescriptions from their doctors and pay out-of-pocket for medication because their original prescriptions covered by insurance never arrived.

The National Association of Letter Carriers reported that the Postal Service delivers 1.2 billion prescription drug shipments each year – amounting to four million shipments every day, six days a week.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Mail Order Pharmacy provides prescriptions to approximately 80 percent of all veterans via mail, processing 470,000 prescriptions daily.<sup>2</sup> Despite these figures, “prescription medication can only be as effective as a patient’s ability to access it.”<sup>3</sup>

The Postal Service’s role in delivering medications to Americans has only grown during the COVID-19 crisis. When COVID-19 stay-at-home orders began in March, mail-order prescriptions reportedly increased by 21 percent from the year prior.<sup>4</sup> What was previously a routine visit to the pharmacy now places millions of Americans at an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises Americans to “limit in-person visits to the pharmacy” and, if possible, to use drive-thru windows, mail-order, or other delivery services to pick up medications.<sup>5</sup> As Postal Service delays cause Americans to worry when, if at all, they will receive their next supply of medication in the mail, patients across the country may be forced to seek their prescriptions in person at a pharmacy—increasing their risk of exposure to COVID-19 at a time when staying home is vital to their health and well-being.

We call on you to immediately reverse all operational and organizational changes that have resulted in life-threatening delays of critical medications to Americans. As you noted, “it is imperative for the Postal Service to operate efficiently and effectively, while continuing to provide service that meets the needs of [its] customers.”<sup>6</sup> Right now, the Postal Service is failing to meet the needs of many Americans and adhere to its mission of “prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas.”<sup>7</sup> As we continue to fight this pandemic, the Postal Service is integral to keeping millions of Americans safe, especially seniors, people with chronic conditions, and people with disabilities.

To that end, please provide the following information by September 21, 2020:

1. What considerations did you give to mail-order medications before implementing the recent operational and structural changes throughout the Postal Service?
2. What, if any, actions did you take to prevent potential delays in the delivery of mail-order medications? If you made no specific adjustments or considerations, please explain why.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Letter Carriers, [Statement by NALC President Fredric Rolando: The Postal Service in vital in this crisis](#) (Mar. 27, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Dep’t of Veterans Affairs, [Pharmacy Benefits Management Services](#) (undated) (accessed Aug. 23, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> American College of Physicians, [Internists Say Delivery of Mail-order Prescriptions is Critical](#) (Aug. 17, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Wall Street Journal, [Mail-Order Drug Delivery Rises During Coronavirus Lockdowns](#) (May 12, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Your Health: Doctor Visits & Getting Medicines](#) (Aug. 14, 2020).

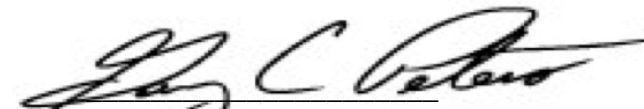
<sup>6</sup> Letter from David E. Williams, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Vice President, United States Postal Service to HSGAC Ranking Member Peters (Aug. 6, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> 39 U.S.C. § 101(a).

3. What steps, if any, does the Postal Service intend to take to address existing delays in the delivery of mail-ordered prescriptions that have occurred as a result of the operational and structural changes you implemented?
4. Please identify the operational and structural changes implemented during your tenure that you plan to reverse.
  - a. Please explain how you decided which changes to reverse, as well as your rationale for each reversal.
  - b. Do you plan to re-implement any of these changes after the November 2020 election? If so, what safeguards will you put in place to avoid significant mail delays and keep Americans safe?
5. Please identify the operational and structural changes implemented during your tenure that you chose *not* to reverse.
  - a. Please explain your justification for each decision.
  - b. Please explain the consequences these changes could have for the ability of Americans to receive their medications in a timely and consistent manner through the mail, and whether the Postal Service has adopted safeguards to address these issues.


Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



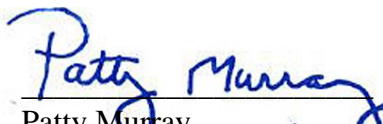
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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator




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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator




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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



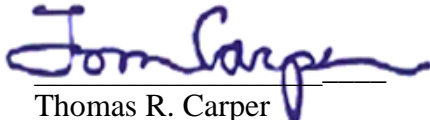
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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

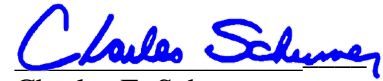


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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



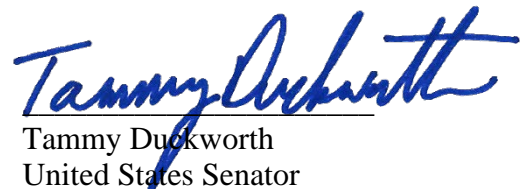
Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



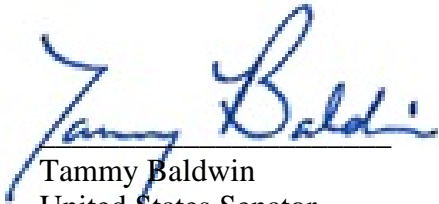
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



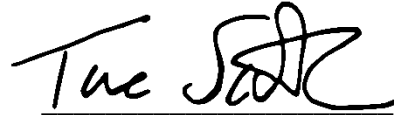
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



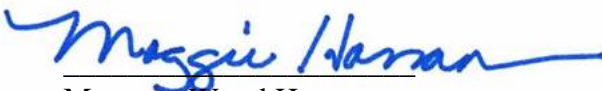
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



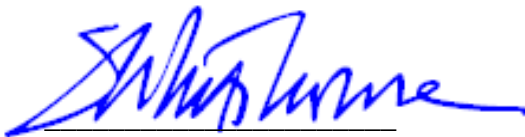
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



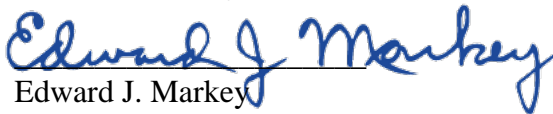
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



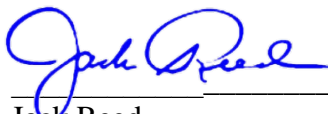
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin

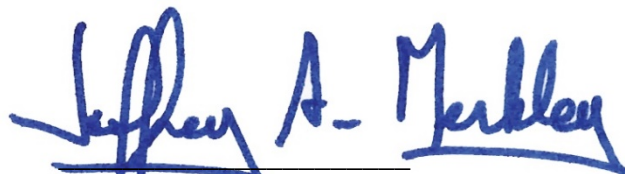
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator