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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

November 16, 2017

The Honorable Megan J. Brennan
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Ms. Brennan:

I write to express concern about the lack of communication by the U.S. Postal Service (Postal Service) with residents and officials of Laurie, Missouri, regarding their access to retail postal services.

As you know, the Contract Postal Unit (CPU) in Laurie was abruptly closed in January. Customers were given just one week's notice before the CPU was closed, and have since received no updates from the Postal Service as to when or if they can expect service to be restored to their community.¹ City officials stated that the Postal Service informed them that a decision on whether to restore service to the community would be made by September.² The Postal Service sent a letter dated October 5, 2017, to Laurie officials concerning a replacement CPU, but no decision was offered at that time. It is now November, and Laurie officials have still not received an update.

In addition to this incident, the Postal Service has used its emergency suspension authority to close post offices indefinitely—many of which remain closed for years—without notice to the community. Last year, in response to a document request, the Postal Service provided me with information showing that 650 post offices have been closed under emergency suspension policy since 2011.³ Of those closed, 78% remained under suspension as of 2016, leaving these communities in limbo for too long.⁴

Not only have officials of Laurie been left in the dark for nine months, but we both have received conflicting information. According to the Mayor, the Postal Service told Laurie officials that no decision could be made about the resumption of retail services in Laurie due to a moratorium on new CPUs agreed to by the Postal Service and the American Postal Workers

¹ Letter from Scott R. Slusher, U.S. Postal Service, to Senator Claire McCaskill (May 22, 2017).

² Letter from Mayor Allen Kimberling, City of Laurie, Missouri, to Senator Claire McCaskill (Sept. 26, 2017).

³ Letter from Edward Phelan, U.S. Postal Service to Senator Claire McCaskill (May 12, 2016).

⁴ *Id.*

Union.⁵ Yet, in your office's response to my initial letter on this matter, the Postal Service stated that "[r]eplacements for closing CPUs are considered during the moratorium and are allowed on a case-by-case basis."⁶ It is troubling that my constituents and I are receiving conflicting information from the Postal Service.

When communities lose their long established retail postal facility, even temporarily, those communities deserve accurate, ongoing updates from the Postal Service stating when service may resume or whether any postal retail services will return at all. I have introduced legislation that would ensure that communities receive the type of ongoing communication they deserve. I hope that you will support this legislation, so that Postal Service customers who lose service have notice of when or if service will return.

In order to better understand the status of retail postal services for the Laurie, I request the following information:

1. Copies of all communications between the Postal Service and officials of Laurie in the last 2 years;
2. A timeline for the decision on whether to reopen the Laurie CPU at a different location;
3. The factors used to decide whether to reopen a CPU in Laurie;
4. The locations currently being considered for a CPU in Laurie and the status of negotiations with those entities;
5. A date by which Laurie Officials can expect additional communication from the Postal Service on the status of the CPU.

I also request that you copy my office on all official, written or electronic correspondence to officials of Laurie, Missouri. I request you provide this information no later than December 5, 2017. Please send any questions to Kirk Kaneer at (202) 224-1957, and please send official correspondence to Lucy Balcezak at Lucy_Balcezak@hsgac.senate.gov. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

⁵ Letter from Mayor Allen Kimberling, City of Laurie, Missouri, to Senator Claire McCaskill (Sept. 26, 2017).

⁶ Letter from Scott R. Slusher, U.S. Postal Service, to Senator Claire McCaskill (May 22, 2017).

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cc: Ron Johnson
Chairman