

CONGRESS PUSHES BACK ON OPERATIONAL MAIL MOVES

Katie Maddocks, Legislative and Political Director



With proposals from the USPS *Delivering for America* (DFA) plan that would impact processing and distribution centers (P&DCs) as well as the network, members of Congress are growing more and more concerned about service and delivery. To this point, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) held an oversight hearing on April 16. In his opening statement, Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) commented, "There is no clear evidence that shows the changes will improve service in the long run. When I have repeatedly asked the Postal Service for detailed studies, it cannot provide them." In order to get a better understanding of the Postal Service's mail processing

In their testimonies, PMG DeJoy and BOG Chairman Martinez commented that the Postal Service has been financially struggling for well over a decade, operating at losses in order to meet customer demands. DeJoy reaffirmed his commitment to the DFA as the only comprehensive solution, while Martinez added that the DFA is working, it just needs more time for implementation. DeJoy acknowledged the service delays currently impacting the Richmond, Atlanta, and Houston areas, however, he attributed these problems to management failures, employee absenteeism, transportation issues, and overcoming legacy issues within USPS.

IG Hull and PRC Chairman Kubayanda expressed concern over

further expressed concern over lack of local coordination and input from the public. Kubayanda commented that with the relaxed service standards, efficiency has declined.

During a line of questioning, Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV) brought up the proposed changes of moving mail operations from the Reno P&DC to the Sacramento P&DC. Directing her comments and questions to the PMG, Senator Rosen highlighted concerns with the lack of local engagement with the proposed moves and the potential impacts on seniors, veterans, and rural residents. Additionally, she brought up the logistical problem that the only way to get from Reno to Sacramento was through the notorious Donner Pass, which experiences an average of 33 feet of snow annually and had 15 road closures over 37 days last winter. She further expressed frustration that processing mail across state lines will further delay service and marginalize underserved communities.

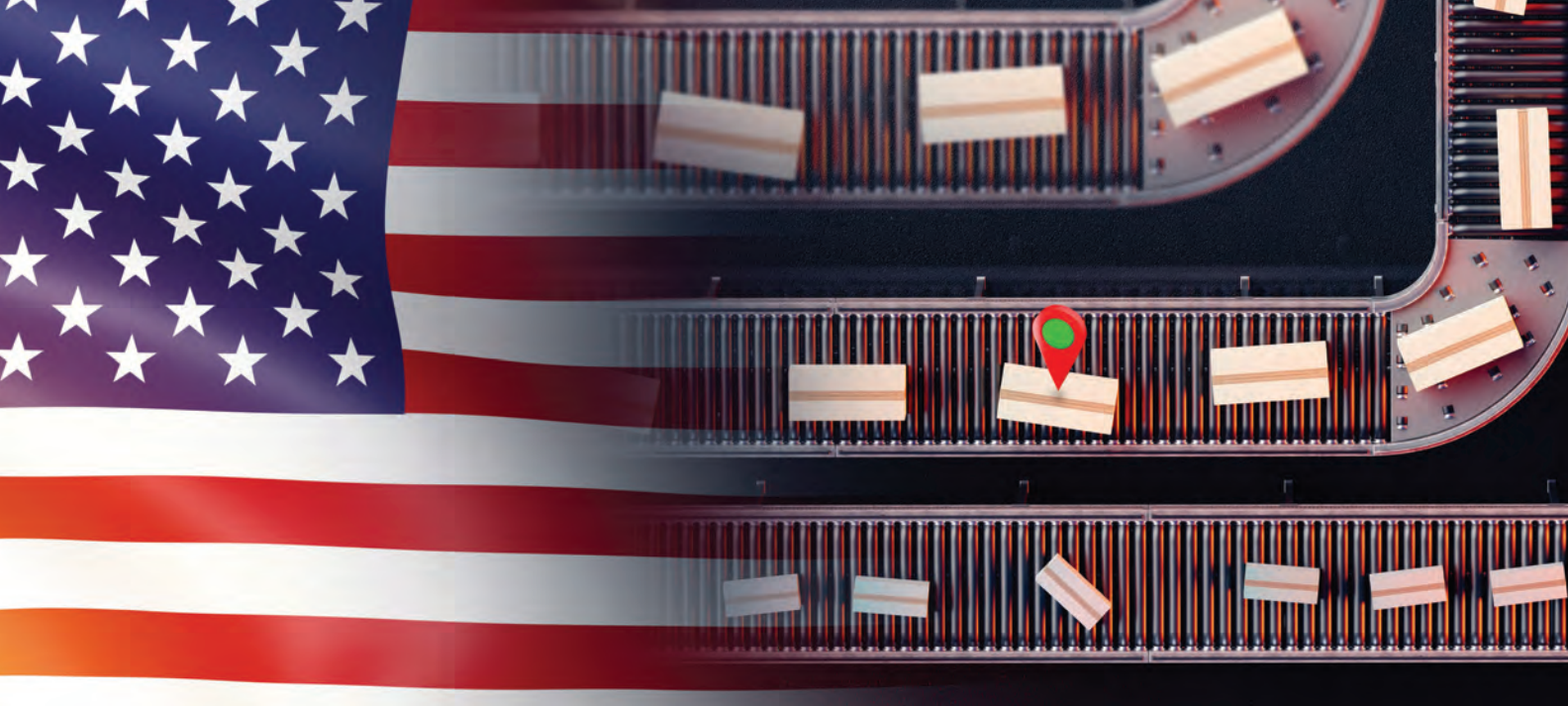
Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA) also raised concerns about delays, pointing out that inbound mail in Palmetto, Georgia, has a rate of 36 percent for on-time delivery. Senator Ossoff stated that the public needed answers on these operational failures. When asked when service will improve, DeJoy commented that it would take months. Sen. Ossoff said that wasn't sufficient, that the Postal Service is failing its core mission, and that the issues needed to be fixed in weeks.

Echoing the general frustrations of the committee, members of both the

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facility reviews (MPFRs) and proposed changes to the network, HSGAC heard testimony from Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, USPS Board of Governors (BOG) Chairman Roman Martinez, Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) Chairman Michael Kubayanda, and USPS Inspector General Tammy Hull.

these delays and their impact on service for customers. Prior to the hearing, the Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of the changes happening in the Richmond area and found that while changes could offer financial savings, service decreased significantly, especially within rural areas. Hull



House and Senate introduced multiple, bipartisan bills addressing the consolidations implemented by the MPFRs. The Timely Mail Delivery and Postal Services Protection Act (H.R. 8000), as introduced by Representatives Jared Golden (D-ME-02) and August Pfluger (R-TX-11) would stop any funding for MPFRs as well as require the PRC to approve of any future consolidations. Protect Postal Performance Act, H.R. 8040, introduced by Reps. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13) and Jack Bergman (R-MI-01), prohibits consolidations in areas that are not meeting Postal Service delivery standards of 90.3 percent delivery for three to five-day first-class mail and 93 percent on-time delivery for two-day first-class mail. The Postal Operations Stay Timely and Local (POSTAL) Act, H.R. 8045, introduced by Reps. Harriet Hageman (R-WY-AL) and Chris Pappas (D-NH-01), stops the Postal Service from closing, consolidating, or downgrading P&DCs if such an action would remove the sole P&DC within a state or negatively impact mail delivery. The Senate version of the bill, S. 4160, is sponsored by Senators Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), John Barrasso (R-WY), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).

Sen. Jon Tester's (D-MT) the Protecting Access to Rural Carriers for Every Location (PARCEL) Act, S. 4254, prohibits consolidation if operations would move out of state; if geographical hindrances would impact delivery; and, if the public does not favor the move.

In addition to these bills, a bipartisan group of 26 Senators wrote to PMG DeJoy, calling for a moratorium of changes to the network until the PRC can examine the changes and analyze the full impact of the MPFRs. "We are concerned about the impacts these changes have had so far, and the potential impacts that further changes could have. In regions where USPS has implemented significant changes, on-time mail delivery has declined," the letter stated. The Senators continued, "In addition, it is not clear these changes will improve efficiency or costs. Despite these concerns, USPS has moved forward with announcing and approving additional facility changes across the country."

To abate these concerns, DeJoy and USPS issued a statement that a pause would be placed on MPFRs until January 1, 2025. The Postal Service clarified, though, that this pause was always the plan under the DFA and other previously scheduled changes

to the postal network will continue as planned, despite already struggling to meet on-time delivery standards. The NPMHU will continue to work with members of both the House of Representatives and Senators on these changes. We will continue to inform them on how any possible changes to the network would impact not only our members and mail handler jobs, but also the ramifications changes would have on customers and the sustainability of the United States Postal Service.

With these changes to the network, it is necessary that the NPMHU supports elected officials that promote improved service of USPS while protecting the workforce. We do that through the NPMHU PAC, providing financial support to our friends and champions to be re-elected to Capitol Hill. I want to thank all NPMHU members who give to the PAC. We acknowledged your giving in the last edition of the magazine, but there were some mistakes in the giving list. Eastern Regional Vice President/Local 308 President John Gibson and Local 310 Recording Secretary Chawanda Parson should have been listed as a Super Ambassador, and CAD National Representative Tom Ruther should have been listed as an Ambassador.