



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Majority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, and Whip Clyburn:

I write today to express my strong support for the inclusion in legislation addressing the coronavirus pandemic of the direct Federal funding necessary to ensure the long-term solvency of the U.S. Postal Service.

The Postal Service is a critical public institution that reaches every American household. Millions of Americans rely on the Postal Service to bring their medicines, vital supplies, and personal mail. These services are even more important as Americans maintain social distance to slow the spread of the coronavirus—and the Postal Service’s dedicated workforce is providing an essential lifeline to many families. The Postal Service is also a central part of the postal and shipping sector, which has been designated as a component of our nation’s critical infrastructure.¹

¹ Department of Homeland Security, National Infrastructure Protection Plan (accessed on April 13, 2020) (online at www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/nipp_postal.pdf).

The Postal Service truly binds our nation together. It maintains more than 31,000 post offices and provides service to “nearly 160 million delivery points.” In fiscal year 2019, more than 44 million of the nation’s mail delivery points were rural residential delivery points—and as I know from my own district, for many of these rural households, there is no delivery option other than the Postal Service.² Through its network, the Postal Service meets what is often called its “universal service obligation,” which, as provided in 39 U.S.C. §101(a), requires “prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas” of the United States.³

Not surprisingly, the Postal Service is beloved by Americans. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center just a few weeks ago, “An overwhelming 91% say they have a favorable view of the mail delivery service.”⁴ Similarly, in an article entitled “Postal Service Still Americans’ Favorite Federal Agency,” Gallup reported that 74% of poll respondents said the Postal Service “is doing an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ job.”⁵

The Postal Service’s finances were on an unsustainable trajectory even prior to the coronavirus crisis. According to its most recent annual report to Congress, “In fiscal year 2019, the Postal Service recorded a net loss of \$8.8 billion.”⁶ The Postal Service also owes tens of billions of dollars in payments it was required by Federal law to make to pre-pay retiree health benefits—a requirement that is not imposed on any private business.⁷

Unfortunately, the coronavirus—and the economic standstill created by the need to maintain social distancing practices—have led to astounding week-to-week declines in mail volume and created an imminent threat to the solvency of the Postal Service.⁸

The loss of the Postal Service is simply unthinkable. It would not only cut off thousands of rural communities, it would imperil the affordable, daily delivery service on which countless households across the nation rely. At a time when taxpayers are providing hundreds of billions of dollars of

² United States Postal Service, FY 2019 Annual Report to Congress (undated) (online at <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2019.pdf>).

³ Postal Regulatory Commission, Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report to the President and Congress (Jan. 21, 2020) (online at www.prc.gov/sites/default/files/reports/FY2019_Annual%20Report.pdf).

⁴ Pew Research Center, “Public Holds Broadly Favorable Views of Many Federal Agencies, Including CDC and HHS” (April 9, 2020) (online at www.people-press.org/2020/04/09/public-holds-broadly-favorable-views-of-many-federal-agencies-including-cdc-and-hhs/).

⁵ Gallup, *Postal Service Still Americans’ Favorite Federal Agency* (May 13, 2019) (online at <https://news.gallup.com/poll/257510/postal-service-americans-favorite-federal-agency.aspx>).

⁶ United States Postal Service, FY 2019 Annual Report to Congress (undated) (online at <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2019.pdf>).

⁷ See e.g., Government Accountability Office, *POSTAL RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS: Unsustainable Finances Need to Be Addressed* (August 2018) (online at www.gao.gov/assets/700/694188.pdf).

⁸ National Public Radio, *You’ve Got Less Mail: The Postal Service Is Suffering Amid The Coronavirus* (April 8, 2020) (online at www.npr.org/2020/04/08/828949609/youve-got-less-mail-the-postal-service-is-suffering-amid-the-coronavirus).

aid to private companies in distressed industries, it is essential that we stand together to save the Postal Service and ensure it can continue to deliver for all Americans for generations to come. For that reason, it is essential that legislation addressing the coronavirus pandemic include the direct Federal aid necessary to protect the Postal Service from insolvency.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and thank you again for your leadership during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman