

# All the Latest on Trump's War on Our Public Postal Service

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*The House passed legislation to defend the Postal Service, but unless the Senate takes action, the Postmaster General will be free to continue policies that have slowed the mail and raised concerns about mail-in voting.*

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Less than two months after Trump ally and GOP megadonor Louis DeJoy took the helm of the U.S. Postal Service, the House of Representatives met in an emergency session to address widespread fears about potential sabotage of this vital public agency at a time when it is needed more than ever to deliver medicine and other essentials and to facilitate mail-in voting.

On August 22, 26 Republicans joined 231 Democrats to pass [H.R. 8015](#), which addresses these concerns by: providing \$25 billion in direct emergency relief for USPS, requiring all official election mail to be treated as “first-class mail,” and prohibiting the removal of mail sorting machines and mailboxes and reversing any already implemented changes that could delay mail delivery.

For these changes to become law, activists will need to keep up the pressure. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has not responded to calls for similar emergency action, including [from some within his own party](#). Seven Senate Republicans have co-sponsored bipartisan [legislation](#) that would also provide \$25 billion in postal aid, while other Republicans have put forward a scaled-down \$10 billion proposal. With USPS forecasting Covid-related losses of up to [\\$50 billion](#) over the next decade, \$10 billion in aid is insufficient to ensure that the Postal Service can continue to provide essential services during the pandemic and for years to come. Among ordinary Americans, 90 percent of Republicans and 96 percent of Democrats [support](#) a postal relief package.

Without the force of legislation, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy is unlikely to address the concerns that have sparked more than [800 protests](#) in every state. In testimony before the [Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee](#) on August 21 and before the [House Oversight and Reform Committee](#) on August 24, DeJoy refused to reverse actions that have caused mail slowdowns and did not support the bipartisan Senate and House calls for \$25 billion in crisis relief.

Leaked internal [USPS documents](#) reveal that DeJoy had detailed data showing significant increases in mail delays after his operational changes went into effect but did not share this information with members of Congress who requested it. DeJoy, a wealthy former CEO of a

logistic corporation, reportedly continues to hold at least [\\$30 million](#) in stock in USPS contractor XPO.

At a Congressional Progressive Caucus [hearing](#) on August 20, former Postal Board of Governors Vice Chair David Williams said that a full investigation of DeJoy's potential conflicts of interest was not conducted before he was hired.

In his Congressional testimony, DeJoy contradicted President Trump's attacks on vote by mail by stating that USPS is fully capable of expediting mail-in ballots to ensure timely delivery. At the same time, however, he vowed to push forward on operational changes that have led to significant service delays. He continued to boast about forcing trucks to adhere to a rigid schedule in the middle of a pandemic-related package boom and staffing shortage. USPS managers [warned from the outset](#) that this would result in mail and packages being left behind.

DeJoy also refused to replace sorting machines and blue collection boxes that have been removed under his watch. In testimony before the [Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) on August 20, former Postal Board of Governors member David Williams pointed out that it costs money to remove and destroy machinery and that a USPS analysis of collection boxes concluded that reducing them wouldn't save money.

When Senators asked DeJoy to provide analysis of potential impacts of his actions on seniors, veterans, and others who might suffer from delayed prescription deliveries, late fees on delayed bill payments, and other impacts, he refused, apparently because such analysis was not conducted. In the House hearing, DeJoy acknowledged that he had not consulted with unions or other stakeholders regarding the changes.

It was clear that DeJoy does not grasp that he is leading a public agency with a social mission and a universal service obligation. In Senate testimony, he confirmed a [Washington Post](#) report that he is considering further extreme cuts, and said that what he views as "unfunded mandates" are all potentially on the chopping block. Changes under consideration include raising package rates, particularly when delivering the last mile on behalf of big retailers (they've already announced [holiday surcharges](#) on commercial customers, which will likely be passed on to consumers); setting higher prices for service in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico; and curbing discounts for nonprofits.

The former CEO also repeatedly referred to the Postal Service as a business rather than a service in his Senate testimony and said he wants "pricing freedom" (i.e., the ability to hike rates). He claimed to be looking at ideas for revenue increases, but did not mention a single specific idea. The USPS Office of the Inspector General has estimated that expanding postal financial services such as check cashing, bill payment, and electronic money orders could generate as much as [\\$1.1 billion in annual revenue](#) while benefiting low-income Americans, particularly people of color, who now have to rely on predatory financial firms.

When pressed regarding Covid relief, DeJoy said during the Senate hearing that \$10 billion would be sufficient — far less than the [\\$25 billion](#) the Postal Board of Governors requested earlier this year, which is the same amount in the just-passed House legislation and the bipartisan Senate bill.

For more on the actions that sparked the current postal crisis, key takeaways from DeJoy's Congressional testimony, and the high stakes for workers, democracy, and all Americans in

this debate, see this new "[Explainer](#)" from the Institute for Policy Studies and the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center.

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*Featured image: Brentwood Post Office, Washington, DC, August 25, 2020. (Source: [Inequality.org](#))*

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