

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Shelby, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, our offices have received an outpouring of concern about the financial health of the United States Postal Service (USPS) and its ability to continue to serve the American public, as well as support for the agency's 630,000 employees. As you develop additional coronavirus response legislation, we ask that you include significant emergency appropriations to help the USPS survive this crisis, as well as a mechanism to pay down the agency's current debt obligations. We also encourage you to include language that ensures the USPS is able to borrow funds to the full extent authorized by Congress, without restrictions or conditions that have not been approved by Congress. Finally, we urge you to include additional protections to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the agency's employees, who continue to work on the frontlines on behalf of, and in service to, the American people.

The USPS has seen significant mail volume declines due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the agency projects it could soon run out of resources to pay employees and suppliers as early as September of this year. Emergency funding, additional borrowing authority, and debt forgiveness are necessary to help shore up the agency's finances and help it survive the current national crisis. Postmaster General Megan Brennan recently briefed the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Oversight and Reform that the USPS needs immediate financial support to keep the agency from collapsing due to mail volume loss and new costs associated with the pandemic.

We are also concerned that access to borrowing authority previously provided to the Postal Service in the CARES Act has not yet been executed, and approval may be predicated on reforms that Congress has not approved. Limitations on access to these funds could result in the elimination of universal service, closure of rural post offices, or even privatization. We ask that you consider the importance of timely funding to benefit the USPS operations and ensure that any funds are accompanied by language prohibiting additional requirements that could slow the delivery of assistance provided by Congress.

As you know, mail delivery has always been an essential service, and has become even more critical during the pandemic. Postal employees continue to go to work each day, facing increased risk as they continue to serve. It is critical that the next relief package also include adequate funding to ensure supplies of personal protective equipment, reimbursement for sick and family medical leave related to the coronavirus, and hazard pay for workers who face exposure to the virus on a daily basis.

The Postal Service plays a critical role in American society, and its services are needed now more than ever, especially in our rural communities where local access to grocery stores, pharmacies, and other vital services is often limited or nonexistent. Without immediate relief, the USPS may have to limit or cease operations, which would cause significant harm to Americans who rely on the agency for delivery of medicines, distribution of safety-net benefits, and many other critical services. At this important moment, we ask that you keep in mind the critical importance of the United States Postal Service and the wellbeing of millions of Americans who rely on it.

We are grateful for the leadership each of you has demonstrated as our nation confronts unprecedented challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Pat Roberts
United States Senator