

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2023

The Hon. Roman Martinez IV, Chairman
The Hon. Anton G. Hajjar, Vice Chairman
The Hon. Robert M. Duncan, Member
The Hon. Derek Kan, Member
The Hon. Amber D. McReynolds, Member
The Hon. Donald L. Moak, Member
The Hon. Ronald A. Stroman, Member
The Hon. Daniel Tangherlini, Member
The Hon. William D. Zollars, Member
United States Postal Service Board of Governors
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Members of the Board,

We write with great concern regarding the ongoing staffing crisis and resulting mail delays at United States Postal Service locations across Vermont. In the last month alone, we have received a particularly high volume of calls from the Chittenden County town of Hinesburg about insufficient staffing that has resulted in poor customer service. We have heard similar concerning reports from post offices in Williston, South Burlington, and Windham County. These issues are unacceptable; our constituents deserve better.

Across our state, Vermonters have reported First Class mail delays that have lasted for multiple weeks, with businesses and individuals receiving deliveries that include bills whose due dates have passed by the time they are received. We understand that, in Hinesburg alone, there is a backlog of more than 1,000 packages, with several constituents seeing their package listed as “out for delivery” for days or even weeks on the Postal Service’s tracking tool. Some constituents report that, when visiting their local post office to pick up mail or packages, they are told there are not enough staff available to retrieve their mail and that they need to come back at a different time. Moreover, numerous constituents have been told by their local post offices that their regular mail will be delayed or not delivered at all some days so that mail carriers can prioritize delivering third-party packages. These delays are nothing short of life-threatening for Vermonters who rely on the Postal Service for prescription medication delivery. In fact, we have heard from multiple constituents who have been forced to order emergency prescription replacements because their original medication never arrived or arrived in unusable condition. That is an outrage.

Let us be clear: this situation in Vermont is not the fault of our postal workers. We are grateful for the tireless efforts of these dedicated federal employees in Vermont—as well as their colleagues across the nation—who are working remarkably hard under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We know postal carriers are working 12 hours or more each day, 7 days each week. Their commitment to the work is unwavering, even though they have been entirely let down by Postal Service leadership. Our constituents have been outspoken in their frustration,

which lays not with their friends and neighbors who deliver the mail, but with leadership in Washington that has failed to deliver solutions to these systemic, national issues. They understand that, in many regards, the postal delays in the rest of the country are just as bad as in Vermont, but the rural nature of our state makes the result of these delays substantially more acute.

For years, our Vermont Congressional Delegation has engaged with Postmaster General DeJoy and regional Postal Service leadership in an attempt to address mail delays and staffing issues, yet no help has come. Vermonters understand what we know to be true: passing the Postal Service Reform Act was critical in ensuring the Postal Service has the financial footing necessary to adequately staff the agency and restore delivery service. We, along with our constituents, expect meaningful progress. As a Board, you are statutorily required to review the practices of the Postal Service and set policies on all postal matters. As such, we request that you provide the following information to us by no later than March 1, 2023:

1. All data from the Operations Committee—or any other relevant Committee of the Board—regarding the past and prospective volume and service performance at each Post Office and each Processing and Distribution Center in Vermont and how that data compares with the national average. If no such data exists, please explain why not and what efforts you are taking to collect such data.
2. Detailed information from the Audit and Finance Committee—or any other relevant Committee of the Board—describing the allocation of funds from the Postal Service Reform Act to address mail delays and hiring of needed staff. Please provide any audit information describing the Postal Service’s assessment of its staffing needs and/or delays in the delivery of the mail.
3. We understand that many qualified applicants remove themselves from the Postal Service’s hiring process before their hiring and/or onboarding is complete due to the complexity and length of the process. Please provide us with an assessment of information you have received from the Postal Service leadership to improve and expedite its hiring process to ensure applicants are brought on board in a timely manner.
4. Please provide us with the Compensation and Governance Committee’s performance assessment of leadership, for which it is responsible. Please describe in detail any recommendations made by the Committee, or any relevant membership of the board, to address leadership deficiencies, including those directly linked to the degradation of delivery service standards of the Postal Service.

We trust that you agree with us that the U.S. Postal Service is a critical government agency that must be focused on meeting its duties to the American people. We look forward to your careful attention to our requests as you do your part to restore the faith of our constituents in this important government service.

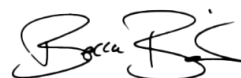
Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Senator



BECCA BALINT
United States Congresswoman