

Trump-DeJoy Slowdown of USPS to Sabotage Election Jeopardizes Americans Amid a Pandemic

Handlers Ordered to Remove Piles of Mail in Effort to Deceive US Congressman

Maintenance Managers Instructed NOT to Reinstall Mail Sorting Machines That
Have Been Removed

Americans Suffer as Prescriptions, Rent/Social Security Checks Delayed as a Result of Trump's Election Interference

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic in which 5.5 million people in the United States have been infected and more than 173,000 have died, Donald Trump is purposely interfering with the Post Office, one of our core institutions that allows people to vote during this time of crisis, protects rural communities and ensures seniors and veterans receive the medications they need.

The reason? Trump publicly admitted that he intentionally slowed down Post Office operations to stop his opponents from voting by mail. In other words, he's trying to benefit himself politically by taking advantage of the fact that millions of Americans understandably want to vote from home in the middle of a pandemic.

The backlash to President Trump's (not even) thinly-veiled actions was so swift and overwhelming that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy issued a statement saying he would stop all changes.

But this is nothing but words and empty promises. DeJoy refused to roll back the changes he already made to slow down service — nor did he commit to restoring overtime for postal workers.

The results have not only been catastrophic for our democracy. It's putting the lives of seniors and veterans at risk.

Here are the facts:



Mailboxes Being Removed In Oregon. [Twitter, @markdelaneysays, 8/8/20]

Trump Admitted That He Is Withholding Money From the U.S. Postal Service During a Pandemic Because He Thinks It Will Hinder Its Ability to Handle Mail-In Ballots and Help His Reelection Chances

- Trump Publicly Stated He Starving The Postal Service Of Funds To Prevent Widespread Vote-By-Mail. "President Donald Trump frankly acknowledged Thursday that he's starving the U.S. Postal Service of money in order to make it harder to process an expected surge of mail-in ballots, which he worries could cost him the election. In an interview on Fox Business Network, Trump explicitly noted two funding provisions that Democrats are seeking in a relief package that has stalled on Capitol Hill. Without the additional money, he said, the Postal Service won't have the resources to handle a flood of ballots from voters who are seeking to avoid polling places during the coronavirus pandemic. 'If we don't make a deal, that means they don't get the money,' Trump told host Maria Bartiromo. 'That means they can't have universal mail-in voting; they just can't have it.'" [Associated Press, 8/13/20]
- Paul Gronke, Election Expert At Director Of The Early Voting Information Center, Argued That Trump's Sabotage Of The U.S. Postal Service Was An Effort "To Fundamentally Undermine The Core Of Democracy." "Gronke characterized Trump's hampering of USPS as an effort 'to fundamentally undermine the core of democracy.' 'They're really gonna try this? I mean, this is pretty blatant,' he told Vox. 'In some ways, for me, this is worse than the Trump attacks [on mail voting], which is just sort of he's flailing. But this could really be harmful." [Vox, 8/11/20]

In Addition to Withholding Funding, Trump and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Actions Are Intentionally Derailing the U.S. Postal Service to Suppress American Votes

<u>DeJoy Has Implemented Changes That Slow Delivery, Centralized Power Around Himself And Maintains Multiple Financial Conflicts Of Interest</u>

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Has Stalled Mail Delivery By Removing High-Speed Letter Sorters,
Deprioritizing Mail-In Ballots, Reducing Post Office Hours, Cutting Overtime For Postal Workers And
Removing Mailboxes. "Under Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's administration, the USPS has slowed delivery,
removed high-speed letter sorters from commission and issued a stark warning to election officials that mail-in
ballots will no longer automatically be moved as priority mail. The postal service has also started reducing post
office operating hours across several states, cut overtime for postal workers and removed some of their iconic
blue letter collection boxes." [CNN, 8/16/20]

- Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Restructured Postal Office Staff To Centralize Power Around Himself.
 "Twenty-three postal executives were reassigned or displaced, the new organizational chart shows. Analysts say
 the structure centralizes power around DeJoy, a former logistics executive and major ally of President Trump, and
 de-emphasizes decades of institutional postal knowledge. All told, 33 staffers included in the old postal hierarchy
 either kept their jobs or were reassigned in the restructuring, with five more staffers joining the leadership from
 other roles." [Washington Post, 8/7/20]
- Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Has A Multimillion-Dollar Stake In His Former Company XPO Logistics, A United States Postal Service Contractor, And He Purchased Stock Amazon Options In June That Gave Him The Right To Buy New Shares Lower Than The Market Price. "Postmaster General Louis DeJoy continues to hold a multimillion-dollar stake in his former company XPO Logistics, a United States Postal Service contractor, likely creating a major conflict of interest, according to newly obtained financial disclosures and ethics experts. Outside experts who spoke to CNN were shocked that ethics officials at the postal service approved this arrangement, which allows DeJoy to keep at least \$30 million in XPO holdings. DeJoy and USPS have said he fully complied with the regulations. Raising further alarms, on the same day in June that DeJoy divested large amounts of Amazon shares, he purchased stock options giving him the right to buy new shares of Amazon at a price much lower than their current market price, according to the disclosures." [CNN, 8/12/20]

Mailboxes And Sorting Machines Have Been Removed Across The Country

- Hundreds Of Mail Sorting Machines Have Been Removed, Including In Battleground States Pennsylvania, Michigan And Florida. "The policies include eliminating overtime for postal workers, limiting the number of mail trucks, and removing hundreds of sorting machines from postal facilities, including those in battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Florida." [Vox, 8/17/20]
- Mailboxes Have Reportedly Been Removed In Oregon, Montana, New York And Pennsylvania. "Social
 media exploded with reports from Oregon, Montana, Manhattan and Pennsylvania that the Postal Service was
 unbolting and hauling away mailboxes. 'Some of the boxes scheduled to be removed from downtown Billings are
 nearly overflowing daily,' Julie Quilliam, president of the Montana Letter Carriers Association, wrote on Facebook,
 per AP." [Axios, 8/15/20]
- Mailboxes Were Removed In Massachusetts. "After trucks were seen hauling mailboxes away in
 Massachusetts towns, the United States Postal Service says it will stop removing the boxes after criticism that it is
 undermining coming elections. A truck was seen removing mailboxes in Brookline this weekend and others have
 been taken away across the country. Postmaster Louis DeJoy has made drastic changes to the postal service
 since he was appointed by President Trump in June, including eliminating overtime that allows mail to be
 delivered." [7News Boston, 8/16/20]

Mail Handlers Have Been Ordered To Deceive Those Who Might Hold DeJoy Accountable

• San Antonio Mail Handlers Were Ordered To Remove Piles Of Mail Ahead Of A Visit By Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-San Antonio) "In An Effort To Deceive The Congressman." "When asked whether the processing hub showed signs of disarray, such as backed-up mail, Castro said it was not a busy time of day and the operation 'looked orderly.' But Carlos Barrios, clerk craft director at the plant, later said mail handlers were directed to remove large piles of mail before Castro's visit in an effort to deceive the congressman. 'This mail has been sitting there for weeks and weeks out,' Barrios said. 'So rather than show Castro when he comes in and he sees the cluster there, it's best to not even have it there. So they moved it and they transported the majority of that to the north dock, where they were put on a trailer so they can be sent to Austin.'" [San Antonio Express-News, 8/18/20]

The New Rules And Changes May Cause Problems For Mail-In Voting

Roscoe Woods Jr, President of Michigan Postal Workers Union Local 480-481, Warned That Rules
Implemented By Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Were Delaying Delivery Of Mail In Michigan And That
Would Cause Problems For Mail Ballots During The Presidential Election. "New work rules implemented by
new U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy are significantly delaying delivery of the mail in Michigan, according to
Roscoe Woods, Jr., President of Michigan Postal Workers Union Local 480-481. And Woods says the removal of

several mail sorting machines at two of the state's mail distribution centers could cause problems closer to Election Day, when mailed-in ballots are expected to surge." [Michigan Radio, 8/14/20]

- The U.S. Postal Service Sent A Letter To 46 States And D.C. Warning That They Cannot Guarantee That All Ballots Will Be Delivered In Time For The November Election And That The Delay May Disqualify People's Votes. "Anticipating an avalanche of absentee ballots, the U.S. Postal Service recently sent detailed letters to 46 states and D.C. warning that it cannot guarantee all ballots cast by mail for the November election will arrive in time to be counted adding another layer of uncertainty ahead of the high-stakes presidential contest. The letters sketch a grim possibility for the tens of millions of Americans eligible for a mail-in ballot this fall: Even if people follow all of their state's election rules, the pace of Postal Service delivery may disqualify their votes." [Washington Post, 8/14/20]
- Voters Across Connecticut Received Absentee Ballots After The August Primary, Despite That They Were
 Postmarked Days Before. "In Connecticut, voters across the state received their mail-in ballots after the August
 primary. Many were postmarked at a least a week or up to 10 days prior. Some voters who requested ballots
 weeks in advance received them too late to return via mail." [New York Times, 8/18/20]
- USPS Quietly Changed Rules To Forbid Employees From Serving As Absentee Ballot Witnesses, Making It More Difficult For Rural Voters To Vote By Mail. "In a nationwide rule change that went unnoticed this summer, the U.S. Postal Service has forbidden employees from signing absentee ballots as witnesses while on duty. The change could make it more difficult for Alaskans, particularly rural residents, to vote by mail. In Alaska and several other states, absentee ballots must be signed by a witness who can verify that a ballot was legitimately filled out by a particular voter. Without a signature, the ballot will not be counted. Alaska's ballot instructions say to 'have your signature witnessed by an authorized official or, if no official is reasonably available, by someone 18 years of age or older.' It lists postal officials as an example of an authorized official, but many Alaska voters said postal clerks told them they were forbidden from signing ballots." [Anchorage Daily News, 8/18/20]

Public Outcry Pushed DeJoy to Halt Implementation of New Changes — But the Damage Is Already Done

<u>Though DeJoy Said He Would Suspend Operational Changes Going Forward, He Did Not Commit To Reversing Changes Already In Place</u>

- DeJoy Promised To Suspend Implementation Of Cost-Cutting Measures Amid Outcry That Changes Could Sabotage The Election. "Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, facing intense backlash over cost-cutting moves that Democrats, state attorneys general and civil rights groups warn could jeopardize mail-in voting, said on Tuesday that the Postal Service would suspend those operational changes until after the 2020 election. The measures, which included eliminating overtime for mail carriers, reducing post office hours and removing postal boxes, have been faulted for slowing mail delivery and criticized as an attempt to disenfranchise voters seeking to vote safely during the coronavirus pandemic." [New York Times, 8/18/20]
- But DeJoy Did Not Promise To Reverse Changes Already Put In Place, Including The Removal Of
 Hundreds Of Mail Sorting Machines. "Mr. DeJoy... said on Tuesday [August 18] that he would suspend
 cost-cutting and operational changes that have slowed mail delivery and fueled worries about mail-in voting in the
 November election. But Mr. DeJoy did not commit to reversing changes already put in place, including the
 removal of hundreds of mail-sorting machines, some of which have already been destroyed, according to union
 officials and postal workers." [New York Times, 8/18/20]
- According To House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, DeJoy "Admitted That He Had No Intention" Of Replacing Elements Of Mail Infrastructure That Have Already Been Removed. "Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, who spoke with Mr. DeJoy on Wednesday, said in a statement that the postmaster general 'frankly admitted that he had no intention of replacing the sorting machines, blue mailboxes and other key mail infrastructure that have been removed, and that plans for adequate overtime, which is critical for the timely delivery of mail, are not in the works." [New York Times, 8/18/20]

The Effects Of DeJoy's Changes Are On Full Display

 Following DeJoy's Promise To Suspend Changes, NBC Obtained Images Of Sorting Machines That Had Already Been Removed And Dismantled. "NBC News Exclusive: A day after #USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said he was suspending changes critics blame for slowing down the mail, we obtained images showing sorting machines already removed and dismantled." [Twitter, @GeoffRBennett, 8/19/20]



NBC News Exclusive: A day after #USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said he was suspending changes critics blame for slowing down the mail, we obtained images showing sorting machines already removed and dismantled. My report tonight for @NBCNightlyNews:



[Twitter, @GeoffRBennett, 8/19/20]

- The Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Under Law, The National Urban League, Common Cause, And The League Of Women Voters Filed A Lawsuit Against DeJoy Stating That DeJoy's "Empty Rhetoric" On Suspending Changes "Did Not Outline A Comprehensive Plan For Restoring The Status Quo At The Postal Service." "On Tuesday the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law joined the National Urban League, Common Cause, and the League of Women Voters in filing a lawsuit against the Postal Service and postmaster general Louis DeJoy, who started in June. Earlier Tuesday DeJoy announced he was halting changes which he says began before he became postmaster general until next year after this fall's elections. But the groups behind the lawsuit say DeJoy's 'empty rhetoric did not outline a comprehensive plan for restoring the status quo at the Postal Service.' Among the issues they say need to be resolved the dismantling of sorting machines. Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law president Kristen Clarke says the group uncovered Postal Service plans for the dismantling of 671 high volume sorting machines, and although DeJoy has pledged to stop decommissioning any more machines for now, it's unclear what will replace ones already dismantled."

 [WJLA, 8/19/20]
- USPS Instructed Maintenance Managers Across The Country Not To Reconnect Or Reinstall Mail Sorting Machines That Have Been Disconnected, Despite DeJoy's Promise To Halt Changes Until After The Election. "Shortly after USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy issued a public statement saying he wanted to 'avoid even the appearance' that any of his policies would slow down election mail, USPS instructed all maintenance managers around the country not to reconnect or reinstall any mail sorting machines they had already disconnected, according to emails obtained by Motherboard. 'Please message out to your respective Maintenance Managers tonight. They are not to reconnect / reinstall machines that have previously been

disconnected without approval from HQ Maintenance, no matter what direction they are getting from their plant manager,' wrote Kevin Couch, Director of Maintenance Operations. 'Please have them flow that request through you then on to me for a direction.' A subsequent email sent to individual maintenance managers across various regions forwarded that request along with a single sentence: 'We are not to reconnect any machines that have previously been disconnected.'" [VICE, 8/20/20]

The Sabotage of the Post Office by President Trump and Louis DeJoy Has Already Resulted in Catastrophic Consequences for People Across the Country.

Changes At The Post Office Are Delaying Prescription Deliveries for Americans, Including Vets

- Veterans Have Had To Wait Weeks To Receive Necessary Medication. "Texas: A 40% disabled veteran has been waiting two weeks for his sleeping medication. His 90-year-old veteran father waited nearly two weeks for his high blood pressure meds. Tennessee: A former U.S. Army Sgt. says his 'prescription should have been here by now." [Twitter, @GeoffRBennett, 8/16/20]
- In Indiana, An Air Force Veteran And Former U.S. Secret Service Agent Drove Two Hours For Life-Saving Heart Medication. "Indiana: An Air Force veteran and former U.S. Secret Service agent had to drive two hours round-trip to pick up life-saving heart medication. He's been waiting nearly three weeks for a CPAP mask and tube, which usually takes 3-5 days by mail." [Twitter, @GeoffRBennett, 8/16/20]
- Democratic US Senators: "No Veteran Should Have To Wonder When Their Antidepressant Or Blood Pressure Medication May Arrive." "Policy changes that slow delivery at the U.S. Postal Service are taking a toll on military veterans, who are reporting much longer wait times to receive mail-order prescription drugs, according to Democratic senators... 'Access to prescription medications is especially integral during the COVID-19 pandemic when routine health care appointments may be delayed or cancelled,' according to the [Democrats'] letter, which was led by Montana Sen. Jon Tester, the top Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. 'No veteran should have to wonder when their antidepressant or blood pressure medication may arrive and the effects can be devastating if doses are missed.'" [ABC News, 8/14/20]
- An 82 Year Old Texas Man Has Been Without His Heart Medication For A Full Week, As It Sits Undelivered
 At A North Houston Post Office. "Operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service are causing delays in mail
 deliveries all over the country. A man in Humble said he had to go without his daily heart medication for a week
 due to the delays. Don White, 82, said he has been tracking the package and said it remained at a north Houston
 mail processing facility for 10 days. He's hoping to get in on Monday." [KSDK, 8/16/20]
- Delays For Deliveries Of Prescription Medications Come As Use Of Mail-Order Prescriptions Rose By 21
 Percent During Quarantine. "An increasing number of patients are turning to mail or courier to get their
 prescription drugs during coronavirus lockdowns. During the last week of March, mail-order prescriptions rose
 21% from the previous year to bring their share of the prescription drug market to 5.8%, the highest share in at
 least 2 years, according to data from SunTrust Robinson Humphrey analyst Gregg Gilbert." [American
 Pharmacists Association, 5/13/20]

<u>Changes Are Resulting In Other Consequences — Including For Rent, Farmers, Small Businesses, The Census</u>

- Since Changes At The Post Office, Rent, Food, Child Support, And Social Security Checks Have Arrived Late. "A lawsuit filed Tuesday by Washington and 13 other states included similar accusations of delays and disenfranchisement. Among the accusations contained in the lawsuit: Baltimore residents have gone weeks without mail, and dozens of trailers filled with packages have been left behind in the Milwaukee area. Rent, food and child support checks have arrived late. And seniors have received delayed Social Security checks, the lawsuit states, adding that veterans have experienced weeks long waits for medications." [New York Times, 8/18/20]
- Mary Of Enumclaw, Washington: "Due To The Current USPS Slow Down, I Am Now Two Months Behind In Receiving My Medical Care Claim Payments... I Have Missed My August Rent. The First Time I Have Missed Rent My Entire 55 Years Due To The Amount Of Money That Is Held Up By The USPS. "In Issaquah, [Washington,] Rep. [Kim] Schrier said hundreds of her constituents had reached out to share stories of medications and payments being delayed in recent weeks, including veterans and seniors on fixed incomes... In a news release, Schrier shared excerpts from two constituents: ...Mary from Enumclaw: 'I am disabled. Medicare

covers the treatment for my disability. However, I have to file my claims for Medicare using the USPS and Medicare pays my claims via USPS. Due to the current USPS slow down, I am now two months behind in receiving my medical care claim payments. All medical claims have been approved by Medicare and checks have been issued. However, I have not received my June claim checks that were processed, approved and released on July 20th by Medicare. I mailed my July claim on August 1st. Medicare has still not received that claim. This is now \$4,000 out of my pocket that I cannot afford. I have never had an issue with the Medicare claim process in the past. Turnaround from my mailing a claim, to Medicare processing the claim to me receiving a check, was 3-4 weeks prior to the current USPS situation. I am now at 8 weeks and counting for my June claims. I have missed my August rent. The first time I have missed rent my entire 55 years due to the amount of money that is held up by the USPS. I am also having to stop my medical treatments until I receive my claim checks from June and July." [Patch, 8/18/20]

- Almost 5,000 Chicks Shipped To Maine Farmers Through The U.S. Postal Service Arrived Dead In Recent Weeks. "At least 4,800 chicks shipped to Maine farmers through the U.S. Postal Service have arrived dead in the recent weeks since rapid cuts hit the federal mail carrier's operations, U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree said. Pingree, a Maine Democrat, is raising the issue of the dead chicks and the losses farms are facing in a letter to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and U.S. Department of Agriculture Commissioner Sonny Perdue, The Portland Press Herald reported Wednesday. Pauline Henderson, who owns Pine Tree Poultry in New Sharon, Maine, told the newspaper she was shocked last week when all of the 800 chicks sent to her from a hatchery in Pennsylvania were dead." [USA Today, 8/20/20]
- CNN: "The Delays Have Been Devastating To Small Businesses That Have Come To Rely On The Post Office To Get Their Products To Consumers." "The Postal Service has tried to reduce costs in recent months with changes such as cutting staff hours and eliminating overtime pay. The moves have resulted in mail delays around the country. President Donald Trump has also said he opposes much-needed funding for the agency because he doesn't want to see it used for mail-in voting in the November elections. The delays have been devastating to small businesses that have come to rely on the post office to get their products to consumers. The Postal Service is the most commonly-used delivery carrier among businesses with fewer than five employees, according to the National Small Business Association, a trade group. A Postal Service Inspector General report in 2019, found that 70% of businesses with fewer than 10 employees said they had used the Postal Service in the prior six months." [CNN, 8/20/20]
- Trump's Sabotage Of The U.S. Postal Service Will Likely Hinder The Ability To Get An Accurate Census Count. "Although the vast majority of households (80%) that have filled out a census form on their own did so online, paper forms have been the second-most popular way for those households about 1 in 5 to get counted, especially in rural areas. That's why recent cuts to the U.S. Postal Service are raising concerns among census advocates. While much of the country's attention has been on the potential impact on November's election, some census watchers are worried that any delivery delays over the next few weeks could jeopardize the accuracy of census data collected from sparsely populated parts of the country. That, in turn, could have lasting consequences on the share of federal funding and political representation tied to census numbers that residents in those areas receive for the next decade." [NPR, 8/20/20]

Mail-In Voting Was Supposed to Provide a Safe, Reliable Way for Americans to Participate In Our Elections During a Pandemic

Governors Specifically Expanded Access To Mail-In Voting To Protect Americans During A Pandemic

- On July 6, Governor Charlie Baker (R-MA) Extended Mail-In Voting To "Ensure Maximum Participation"
 While "Minimiz[ing] COVID-19 Risks. "Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law the reforms drafted during the
 pandemic and aimed at ensuring maximum participation while allowing people to choose voting options and
 minimize their COVID-19 risks. This election season, for the first time in the state's history, all voters who wish to
 do so will be able to cast a ballot via mail without needing to qualify for an absentee ballot." [WBUR, 7/6/20]
- Governor Phil Murphy (D-NJ): "Ensuring That Every Voter Has The Ability To Securely Cast Their Ballot,
 While Protecting Public Health, Is Our Paramount Concern." "New Jersey will conduct its general election
 mostly by mail because of the coronavirus pandemic, sending ballots to active registered voters while also
 providing the option to vote in person, Gov. Phil Murphy (D) announced Friday... 'All of us recognize the
 importance of this year's election,' Murphy said in remarks on Friday afternoon. 'Ensuring that every voter has the

ability to securely cast their ballot, while protecting public health, is our paramount concern." [Washington Post, 8/14/20]

• Two Former Indiana Lieutenant Governors Urged Republican Governor Eric Holccomb To Expand Mail-In Voting During The Pandemic. "Two former Indiana lieutenant governors are calling for Gov. Eric Holcomb to expand mail-in voting as the coronavirus pandemic continues. John Mutz, a Republican... and Kathy Davis, a Democrat who served under Joe Kernan, on Friday announced at a news conference that they have decided to partner with Indiana Vote by Mail, a nonprofit that's also advocating for all Hoosiers to have a mail-in ballot option come November. Without a broad mail-in voting option, the former lieutenant governors noted that fewer voting locations and long lines at polls will further suppress votes for minority, disabled and low-income voters. If the state waits too long to make a decision, they added, ill-prepared election offices and ballot backlogs are a feared result. 'Indiana could greatly improve ... to make that happen,' Davis said. 'We better get started. I don't think we can justify waiting for another 30 days of infection rates to suggest that we really need to provide this option.'" [Associated Press, 7/31/20]

In-Person Voting Has Needlessly Put Americans At Risk

• Two Weeks After The April Primaries In Wisconsin, 19 Voters And 7 Poll Workers Tested Positive For Covid-19. "A little more than two weeks after Wisconsin's April 7 election went forward with in-person voting, 19 voters and poll workers who participated have tested positive for COVID-19, although where they were exposed to the disease remains uncertain, according to the state Department of Health Services. People lined up outside polling places to cast their votes in state and presidential primary races on election day despite Gov. Tony Evers' attempts to postpone the election and prevent further spread of the disease." [WPR, 4/22/20]