

TRACKING THE POSTAL SERVICE:
AN UPDATE ON THE DELIVERING
FOR AMERICA PLAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TRACKING THE POSTAL SERVICE: AN UPDATE ON THE DELIVERING FOR AMERICA PLAN

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Pete Sessions [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Sessions, Palmer, Higgins, Biggs, Timmons, Burchett, Boebert, Fry, Edwards, Burlison, Mfume, Norton, Frost, Casar, Connolly, Stansbury, Garcia, Balint, Lee, and Crockett.

Also present: Representatives Comer, Duncan, Mace, LaTurner, Barragan, Raskin, and Lynch.

Mr. SESSIONS. Good morning. The Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce will come to order, and I would like to welcome everybody to this important Subcommittee hearing.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

We also have a number of Members who are seeking to be waved on today's hearing. Without objection, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Lynch, as well as Ms. Mace from South Carolina, both Members of the full Committee on Oversight and Accountability, will be waved in today.

Also, we have the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Duncan, a Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, who has asked to be a part of this today, as well as the gentleman from California, Mr. Barragan, will be waved on the Subcommittee for the purpose of questioning today's hearing.

Mr. DUNCAN. It is Ms. Barragan.

Mr. SESSIONS. Excuse me, it is. Thank you. Ms. Barragan.

And I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

First of all, let me welcome our Postmaster General. The General and I spent some time last week where we were preparing the testimony and the operational needs of today, and I found that the Postmaster General is very open and very thankful for the opportunity of the legislation that was passed last year on a bipartisan

basis not only from the House of Representatives, but also U.S. Senate, and signed by the President of the United States.

This is a 10-year plan. It is a 10-year plan that has goals. It has understandings, and I told the Postmaster General that while there will be people, including myself, that have issues and ideas with the Postal Service, that we believe that the plan that has begun, that he is responsible for implementing and will be held accountable for that. Not just by meeting with us in this Subcommittee, but also the full Committee and as he runs into Members of Congress, there will be people that provide him feedback.

But nonetheless, in May 2020, Louis DeJoy became our Postmaster General, and I appreciate him for his service. His background of running large operations has become apparent. His ability to effectively grab this issue is important.

He inherited a Postal Service that was some 60 days away from running out of cash, an organization in desperate need of modernization. Since his arrival, he has taken that issue on. Obviously, when you are doing this, you need a plan. You need a plan that you are willing to tell people you are a part of, your employees that you are a part of, and work with your employees and the American public to make happen.

He has been before this Committee. He has been forthright of his desire to try and do the things that are in not only the Postal Service's best interest, but also the American people. And we appreciate him being here.

I think it is important to remember that the Postal Service is subject to economic and market forces about as much as any organization in this country. It stretches across this country. Fuel prices, labor issues, the things that—growth and the changes in marketplace are all part of what this Postmaster General has to work with while maintaining the delivery of mail, which is the mission of the Post Office.

So, a lot of things are not necessarily their fault, but they are part of conditions that happen. So, I happen to see progress, and I express my confidence in not only the Postmaster General to continue on his plan. Because he believes that if he does this, it will lead to better outcomes that are stated as goals in the legislation.

But really, I appreciate his tenacity to be forthright about addressing problems. The General knows that today there are going to be Members of Congress who are going to provide him important feedback. Feedback, some that represent communities that are in growth and others that are in demise. Things that are problematic to your employees, we hear about those, too, General. But we know that you are the right man for the job, and I appreciate you taking time to be before this Subcommittee, willing to stay at the table, willing to listen, and willing to learn both ways, us from you and you from us.

So, we appreciate you being here and hearing from us.

I now would recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from Maryland, for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Good morning to my colleagues. Good morning, Mr. DeJoy.

I want to thank Chair Sessions for jointly convening this. I think it is extremely important that we have a chance to talk and to fol-

low up on a number of things that concern Members of this Committee with respect to the United States Postal Service.

As we convene today's Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Workforce, I want to emphasize the latter half of that title of that name, the Federal Workforce. Last week, Congressman Connolly of this Committee, Congressman Fitzpatrick, and myself co-led a resolution designating the week to honor our Nation's public servants, including postal workers all across America and even in our own congressional districts.

So, thank you for keeping the Government running, all of you who are Federal workers. Your hard work, your sacrifices do not go unrecognized by this Committee.

The former Chair of this Subcommittee continuously led valiant efforts to acknowledge and to appreciate our public servants and is a fierce defender and supporter of the Federal work force. Congressman Connolly, I just want to say to him—and I know most of you join me in saying that the attack on his staff earlier this week is weighing heavily on his mind. It is weighing heavily on the minds of all of us. Whether we are Democrats or Republicans, we are all equally devastated by the senseless violence that occurred, and we are all praying for his team's speedy recoveries.

Mr. DeJoy, welcome back to this Committee. The last time you were here, we were all masked up, as we all remember. And although we have had our differences in the past, I am looking forward to a fruitful discussion this morning.

Throughout the pandemic, Baltimore, which I represent, and much of Maryland's Seventh congressional District had the worst on-time delivery in the Nation by far. Now that mail delivery is improving, Maryland is experiencing one of the worst spikes in mail theft, particularly in Bethesda, Potomac, and Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Moreover, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service reports that robberies of postal carriers have increased by 78 percent, resulting in nearly 500 robberies alone in 2022, which I find absolutely amazing. Most of us grew up in an America where postal carriers were not being robbed.

Criminals who commit robberies of Postal Service letter carriers are specifically, we believe, looking for one thing—the so-called “arrow keys,” which grant access to most mailboxes across an entire zip code associated with that key. This provides bad actors with ample opportunities to steal checks and to rewrite them to withdraw excessive amounts of money from a victim's bank account and further victimizes mail recipients to other potential crimes.

So, we are here for a number of things, but we are also here about this. I am concerned about the thousands of dollars that a single family could lose if a check is stolen and oftentimes is. And I am concerned about the safety of our hard-working postal carriers by senseless criminals who we have to find, prosecute, and send off to jail.

Now to cut these costs, the Postal Service, as I understand, has increased its reliability on the private sector to deliver mail. The results, for lack of a better term, have proven to be—and I do not use this lightly—results have often been fatal. In the past three

years alone, third-party trucking companies have been involved in 68 fatal crashes, which have cost the lives of 79 people.

We expect that the Postal Service will take its job seriously to deliver our mail securely and safely, and yet it appears that the Postal Service cannot guarantee fully the safety of individuals and, in some instances, seems to have prioritized cost-saving strategies above the safety that I have just mentioned and the people who have lost their lives through these third-party carriers.

Our postal carriers must be assured that their employer, which is you, Mr. DeJoy, is implementing all strategies and focusing all resources necessary to ensure the safety of its carriers and the timeliness of the mail that they are charged with delivering. That is why Ranking Member Raskin, Congressman Connolly, and myself sent a letter to the Postmaster General requesting the Postal Service's detailed response to this alarming threat that we are all facing, and particularly that 600,000 postal employees could possibly face who are just doing their job.

And so, Mr. Chair, I would ask unanimous consent that we submit that letter for the record.

Mr. SESSIONS. Without objection, it will be entered in the record.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, sir.

I look forward, Mr. DeJoy, to all of your responses today.

Since the USPS 2021 implementation of the 10-year plan, that we all had a lot of discourse and discussion around, 54 million Americans entrusted their Postal Service to deliver just last year their mid-term election ballots securely, on time, per first-class standards, which is now classified within one to five days. And while the Postal Service delivered 99 percent of mail-in ballots on time, we are still concerned that 640,000 arrived late.

Now we can quibble over whether or not 99 percent or 100 percent is the goal. I just know that it is a tough job, and I want to commend the men and women that took that seriously, because there was a lot of concern about whether or not those ballots would be delivered as they should be.

Congress has stepped in, as we all know, to address the financial challenges through the enactment of the bipartisan Postal Reform Act of 2022, which, fortunately, provided significant financial relief to the Postal Service and eliminated many of the archaic requirements to prefund Postal Service retiree health benefits and moved postal retirees into Medicare.

So, there is a lot that we want to talk about. Mr. DeJoy, I want to, again, in advance thank you for your testimony, for your appearance here. I am looking forward to hearing more about those things and many of the other things that many of us on this Committee may not be aware of.

The Chair and I are also charged with conducting true and meaningful oversight. So, I would implore you to overcome the challenges that you face by sharing with us as much as you can so that we might be partners in that process.

I want to thank the Chair, and I want to yield back any time that I would have remaining.

Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time. Mr. Mfume, thank you very much.

We do need to remember that today is about the men and women, the veterans, the people who are part of, not just the Postal Service, but support the Postal Service. We also need to remember our friends in the Capitol Hill Police, who are providing us the safety that we need.

But with that said, I would like to yield for the gentleman the time he would need, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Connolly, who is a Member of this Committee and Subcommittee, for any remarks he would like to make. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank you and my friend, Mr. Mfume, for the heartfelt comments.

And I just want to take a moment to thank all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I have been here 15 years, and I do not think I have ever experienced just the collapse of partisanship over a human issue. And I cannot tell you how much I and my staff appreciate that. Talking with Hakeem Jeffries, talking with Kevin McCarthy, talking with Steve Scalise, and so many, many colleagues offering to help and express support for an unprovoked violent incident.

And Mr. DeJoy, one of the heroes in this story was actually the postman. He came to the office while the attack was going on, and it startled the assailant, and that allowed the woman who was being beaten on the head to escape. And he is sort of an unsung hero in our story.

So, I just want to express that gratitude to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their consideration and very sympathetic response to what is a very difficult situation.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

Mr. SESSIONS. Congressman Connolly, thank you very much. And as you know, there are people on this Committee who have expressed sorrow for what happened, but we also today recognize, Mr. DeJoy, one of your own may have saved what could have been a worse circumstance. So, thank you very much.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman? Over here. I may be out of order. Would it be inappropriate to offer a prayer up for those in Brother Connolly's office that were injured? Would that be appropriate or not?

Mr. SESSIONS. If the gentleman would wish to make a statement, I will recognize the gentleman.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. Well, my statement will be a prayer. If you want to bow your head, that is fine.

Dear Lord, we thank you for this body. We thank you for the men and women that are here. We ask your healing hands upon these folks that were injured in Brother Connolly's office, and we ask that, the Great Physician that you are, that you heal them in body, soul, and spirit.

And we thank you for everything you have given us, Lord. In Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

Mr. SESSIONS. Amen. And thank you. And I thank the gentleman. The gentleman yields back his time.

I would like to, if I can, before we welcome the Postmaster General, to acknowledge the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Comer, the gentleman from Kentucky. Mr. Chairman, thank you for being

here today and for your instructive nature that you began from the time you were Ranking Member to Chairman of providing the confidence to the Postal Service that we can work on these issues.

Also, the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Raskin. I want to thank the Ranking Member and thank him for taking time to be here for this important time.

Louis DeJoy was appointed the 75th Postmaster General of the United States and Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Postal Service in June 2020. Prior to becoming Postmaster General, he had 35 years of experience managing a successful nationwide logistics company. Postmaster DeJoy developed the Delivering for America plan, which is signed into law, a 10-year improvement plan to make the Postal Service financially stable without compromising its mission to deliver mail. As a matter of fact, in the legislation, there are very specific goals that have been established that the General is aware of.

So, I want to thank him for being here today. Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witness will now please rise and raise their right hand.

Mr. DeJoy, welcome. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[Response.]

Mr. SESSIONS. Let the record reflect that the gentleman—our witness answered in the affirmative.

Mr. DeJoy, thank you. We appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witness that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in the full record.

Please limit your oral testimony to five minutes because, I assure you, you will be here until probably 2 [o'clock] this afternoon to answer our questions. And as a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on, and the Members can hear you.

And we ask that you would, as the Members do, politely confine your comments to those things, and then when the light comes back on, we will ask that you finish those questions.

I recognize the Postmaster General for his opening statement. The gentleman is now recognized for five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LOUIS DEJOY
POSTMASTER GENERAL
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE**

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you, Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Mfume, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin. Thank you for having me today to appear before the Committee for an update on the Delivering for America plan.

I have submitted as part of my written testimony our recently released two-year DFA progress report, which contains good news on our progress concerning DFA and the PSRA implementation. It highlights that simultaneously with transforming the organization, we have improved our service, stabilized our work force, expanded our capacity, started to modernize our nationwide network, and

just two years into a 10-year plan, we have cut in half our projected financial losses.

When I arrived here in June 2020, besides being in the middle of a pandemic and in a highly sensationalized political environment, the financial, operational, and organizational condition of the Postal Service had so deteriorated that its continued ability to serve the Nation was in significant jeopardy. The perilous condition was the result of 15 years of posturing, complacency, legislation, regulation, misplaced actions, and inactions that focused on narrow, parochial interests and that failed to confront the cataclysmic events that faced the Postal Service.

This collective failure accumulated to produce the catastrophic consequence the organization was then facing. Most surprisingly, nowhere to be found was any comprehensive plan to put the Postal Service on the right track for the future, even though the alarms and bells had been ringing for more than a decade.

I was aware of these conditions when I accepted the Postmaster General position, offered by a bipartisan Board of Governors who had a charge to fix the Postal Service. So why am I bringing these conditions up now? I want to ensure that we have our eyes wide open about the magnitude of the problem that we need to fix, that we acknowledge the reasons why it is so imperative that we make the kind of significant, transformative changes that are outlined in the Delivering for America plan and that we remain vigilant not to repeat those mistakes of the past.

So, how have we done so far? In a very difficult environment during the pandemic, facing extreme demands for service and at the height of our financial and operational erosion, I worked in tandem with my leadership team and with the support of our Board of Governors to develop and introduce the Delivering for America plan, and we all got working on it.

Today, we are in a substantially better position than we were just over two years ago. We have made great success pursuing the objectives of the DFA plan, and our whole organization is energetically and collaboratively deploying professional tactics that will continue to improve our operational precision, reduce our cost of performance, increase our service reliability, grow our revenue, and provide long-term, enjoyable career paths for all our employees.

Some specific accomplishments I would like to highlight are as follows. Since the release of the plan, service has improved to where 98 percent of the population receives their mail and packages within three days. First-class mail and packages take an average of 2 1/2 days from origin to destination.

The Postal Service has delivered on two successful peak seasons and worked successfully with the Biden Administration and Health and Human Services to deliver 700 million COVID test kits to the American public. These accomplishments demonstrate our ability to quickly ramp up to meet the critical delivery needs of our Nation for both commercial purposes and in our Government capacity and in response to national and local emergencies as part of the country's critical infrastructure.

We have delivered excellent performance on every election, including the highly energized 2020 election, which took place when I first arrived. In that regard, we admirably have fulfilled our role

on multiple occasions as part of the Nation's electoral process whenever election officials or voters chose to utilize us.

We have improved the quality of our career prospects for our work force by converting over 125,000 employees from pre-career to full time, and we have improved the quality of their work lives by implementing enhancements to their workplaces and working conditions to help our employees to succeed so they can help us to achieve success.

And most importantly, we are a different organization with a different leadership and management team that is deploying robust and comprehensive strategies that will continue to sponsor our improvement and transform our culture to one that leads us to world-class performance. And I am very proud of the accomplishments of our management team, our board, our union and management association leaders, and the women and men of the United States Postal Service.

I am also excited to continue our work together to finish what we have started, bringing new life to our cherished organization and tackling the remaining problems we have so we can continue to serve the American people for another 250 years.

Chairman Sessions, Ranking Member Mfume, and Members of the Committee, I thank you for your support, and I look forward to answering the Committee's questions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. DeJoy, thank you very much.

I believe your opening statement and the conversations, which you openly have with not only all Members of Congress, but in particular this Subcommittee and those who have waved on, is important to note that there are many of these factors that seemingly come into your purview that are difficult tasks, but some that require personal attention and a continued part of your plan.

It is not lost on any of us that there are economic conditions that impede your ability to make changes, but there are also day-to-day operational issues, which we believe need to be addressed. Today, you are going to hear from Members of Congress who bring to you and your team very specific examples of items.

I have had, within the congressional district that I am elected to represent—in Travis County, Texas, which is Austin—for my entire service in Texas, 17 problems. And they seem to be around what would be friendly to a robber or a thief, these large, effective for your service to handle a neighborhood, but make themselves a target.

Can you provide me or this Subcommittee with any insight into how you view these large mailboxes that—and I am not sure what you call them. But these large areas that then can be broken into and hundreds of packages can be stolen. And then that, correspondingly, the need to have people in those areas have to go to the post office, stand in line, and then the replacement therein.

This is a part of the crime problem that you have to deal with. Sir, do you have any comment about that specific area?

Mr. DEJOY. I do. I do. So, you are referring to what we would call cluster boxes, which were decided in 2012 by the organization, to put into newly developing areas as our mail volume was coming down significantly. It was the beginning of the—right after the Great Recession. We were losing \$10 billion a year, and the man-

agement was looking for ways of continuing to get mail into communities but start to limit the amount of travel a carrier had to do to get the mail there because the volume was dropping significantly.

Cluster boxes were effective for mail, and effective at a time when crime was less. We are evaluating—and it is a continuing, it is probably the largest number of phone calls I actually get about neighborhoods who want post boxes instead of cluster boxes. This is something that we will look at as we move forward and a big part of our delivery business becomes package-oriented also.

But they are targets, just like the blue box is a target. Just like any access to our system is, in fact, a target we need to defend again. We are looking at different types of double validation in keys, because of stealing the locks, stealing our keys has been an ongoing problem for a number of years, and we are addressing that now. Forty thousand new locks coming into play. That will be tied to our carriers' handheld device for double validation, and it could also be turned off.

So that is some of it. We are looking at hardening our boxes. But some of these they take chainsaws to. I mean, it is pretty deliberate.

But we recognize and I recognize that our success is the ability of people to conduct commerce through the Postal Service, and crime and lawlessness has always been throughout history a deterrent to commerce. And we are looking at a number of ways of trying to address both the residential appeal of having a cluster box or not, which is strictly for commercial purposes from our standpoint, or from the safety and sanctity of the mail and the people and our carriers.

So, it is something we briefed a committee of Congress last week on some of the initiatives that we are rolling out, and that is going to be become an expanding part of our daily discussions is how do we—how do we address this?

I would ask that much of this has to do with the attention to the crime, that the crime gets when we do, in fact, catch people. Mail crime is not—although it is a Federal crime, it is not one of the things prosecutors run to prosecute, and all of this plays into the whole situation that creates the really increasing nature of these happenings.

Mr. SESSIONS. General, thank you. I believe that your insistence on being open about the discussion of this issue, your openness to the frailties that are perceived not only by local law enforcement, but also making sure that we get to a better answer, will help us get there. And I appreciate your discussion.

I will be pleased to stay with you on this issue. I thank the gentleman.

I now would yield five minutes to the gentleman, Mr. Mfume, the Ranking Member of this Subcommittee.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeJoy, I want to go back to the announcement of steps to reduce postal crime that the Postal Service announced last week, and a key part of that is the replacement of the so-called arrow locks, which are the kind of blue box skeleton key that I talked about earlier.

I am glad to hear that somebody is thinking now about a double validation effort. Can you tell me or this Committee, in addition to that, though, are there other safety measures that are being thought of, electronically or otherwise, that might get us to where we need to be? Even if it is thumbprint recognition by carriers.

Mr. DEJOY. So, one of the things that we are doing is looking at ways of hardening our boxes, and that is we have 11,000 new ones that are rolling out this summer. And we are looking at buying another 20,000 coming forward. That will just harden the access, and we will also have these new entry devices, combination entry devices.

We are exploring, with regard to the key, another option that kind of makes the—I forget which one it is—so either the box dumb or the key dumb on a daily basis, and then we—through electronic communication, we revalidate the entry process of the—of the key.

So, our engineering team, along with our retail and delivery team, are working, and it is up—you know, I get briefed on it, a number of different options to prevent basic key access, which is a lot. And key access, the—a big reason for some of the carrier, the crime against carriers is to actually steal—steal the key.

I mean, these keys are on the dark web for \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 a key, you know, to purchase the key. So, we need to race through getting out of those. This delivery that is coming through right now, I signed off on about a year ago. We have had supply chain issues in getting, you know, this equipment into the marketplace.

But those are the two big things, the keys and hardening the device itself, the collection boxes. We have—with this recent announcement, we have put teams out into the community, into several communities to surveil and work with local law enforcement to try and make sure that we identify hotspot areas that we know have been frequently, repetitively throughout the year, we have had locations that have been, you know, attacked over five times, six times a year.

So, working that and working with our employees and communities, asking people to be more alert to these things.

Mr. MFUME. And let me ask you. I mentioned earlier in my opening remarks the trouble that we have been experiencing in Baltimore, both in terms of delivery, which has started to ebb somewhat, but also in terms of these attacks on postal employees. And then I had mentioned particularly in other places in Maryland, like Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Potomac, a new increase going on.

Can you give us a sense of when you expect to have all of these locks installed, and how you are doing that? Is it based on the crime figures? Is it based on the region? Or is it based on something else that you are getting from postal carriers?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. So, we—the quantity of locations that we have boxes is in the millions, and the delivery—I mean, we are—the delivery pace is very dependent on the supply chain. So, this is a several-year project to get—to tighten up everything the way we need to do it.

And it won't—it's not going to be complete without some combined effort on reducing crime in these particular areas. With re-

gard to how and where they go, it is interesting. Postal crime does not necessarily match all the time what community crime is.

Areas where there tends to be more high value in postal boxes is where these trained thieves and lawbreakers go. With some sophisticated processes, they even reroute mail in many cases. So, that is something. Inspection Service works in a very detailed manner with our delivery units, and we have good visibility on crime and incidents that happen and also the—it will take several years to get to a place where you and I would both be happy with it.

Mr. MFUME. Just one other thing because my time is running short. I had mentioned earlier that Ranking Member Raskin, myself, Mr. Connolly, had written this letter to you, which I assume you received, because we are really concerned about the 600,000 postal employees who are just trying to do their job, who are coming up against all sorts of violence. I do not know that in the last 48 hours, you have had a chance to put together or cobble together a response. But off the cuff, could you just speak and tell us as a preview, what you think that response might look like?

Mr. DEJOY. Sir, to be honest with you, I was not in the office yesterday when it came in, and I have not had a chance to really digest it. So, I would hesitate to give a response. But in general, with regards to crime and protecting our employees, I, too, am very concerned about the exposure of our employees to the criminal aspects that are occurring throughout the Nation. We——

Mr. MFUME. Mr. DeJoy, my time is up. But can you tell us when we might expect that?

Mr. DEJOY. Quickly.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you. OK.

Mr. DEJOY. Ten days, less than 10 days.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time. Thank you very much for the direct question, direct answer.

The gentleman, the young gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Burchett, is now recognized for five minutes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I appreciate your all's leadership on this issue. I consider you all both good folks and good friends.

Mr. DeJoy, I think the last time we talked, I yelled at you. So, I will try not to do that this time. I am very passionate about my constituents and the problems that they are having. And thank you for being here.

I want to start by discussing some issues my constituents continue to have with the United States Postal Service. These are folks in Knoxville, and they cannot get mail picked up or delivered for over a week. In some instances, businesses cannot send invoices and receive payments. And since I have been in Congress, it just seems to progressively get worse. I do not know if that is due to my leadership or what, but mail delays are hurting families and small businesses in our community.

How is the Delivering for America plan addressing service performance?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, sir, first of all, I am not aware of the particular problems in Knoxville, but I can give you a description of where we have issues or how they are happening. But I will say the Deliv-

ering for America plan is having a tremendously positive impact on mail delivery.

Today, 98 percent—as I said in my opening remarks, 98 percent of the American population, 98 percent receive their mail and packages within three days. Fifty percent of the mail—first-class mail and packages—get delivered a day in advance. So, we have—when I got here, the network is what was really holding up and—you know?

And when you look at next-day, a day late on the service standards that we have, if you are a day late, it is 99 percent of mail and packages get delivered.

Now, we have our retail—our retail—we fixed a lot in the network. It is costly, but we fixed it, and it is running, and everything is—everything is moving. There is no longer a “tail of the mail,” which was about 10 days when I got here. Our retail and delivery networks throughout the land were the most impacted by the pandemic and where—I mean, they’re massive, 31,000 retail centers, 19,000 delivery units, almost 300,000 carriers going to 165 million delivery points.

The more certain—so this is an area where we had a tremendous amount of turnover, changing population habits. More people moved into the mountains. More people are working from home. Some small post offices had their delivery addresses triple in 18 months, triple. And we have been racing to, you know, to staff and to clean up some operational habits that developed throughout the pandemic, and we are going to—we are going to get there.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Let me ask a few more questions, if I may, and it goes on what you said. You said that they are increasing these things. But the Postal Service has built out capacity of 60 million packages a day, yet you only carry 28 million a day. Can you explain why the Postal Service sees so much excess capacity at a time when volume continues to decline?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. So, if you remember in 2020, in the fall of 2020, the peak of 2020, where we had millions of packages running around the Nation for weeks before they actually got delivered, that was because we lacked any type of capacity. The 30 million packages we were doing, we were using, were mostly being done by hand. We had—so a lot of inefficiencies there.

We had to come up with a methodology quickly to not experience that again the next peak, and one of the ways we did it was to create annex locations and put 250 sorting machines in it. And it is a geographical span. So, we are looking at the yield. We have to cover the area. Does not mean that we are running them, but if we got that many packages, 60 million, we could process them.

There is peaks and valleys of volume. So—

Mr. BURCHETT. Let me interrupt you. I am going to run out of time, and I see where you are headed with this. But could you give us a brief explanation of hardship delivery, and what percentage of hardship delivery requests are approved?

Mr. DEJOY. I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. BURCHETT. Could you get back to me on that, please?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. It seems like everybody in the industry is forging ahead with—in this economic environment, they put a pause on ex-

panding operations. But the Post Office, the Postal Service continues to move ahead with investments in new equipment and facilities. Are you getting your money's worth for those investments, and who is paying for them? Is there an expected timeline for a return on this investment?

And I am out of time.

Mr. DEJOY. Well, so, yes, there is a timeline. We plan to roll out a new network over the next three to five years is what our strategy. And we have a tremendous, embedded infrastructure that has been significantly deteriorated. We have deferred maintenance of \$6 billion, \$7 billion. And this is really what the expansion is.

And at the end of—when we get done with this, right now, we have 400 locations that we move mail and packages across the Nation in. We are going to move that into 60, into 60 locations. We are just going to be consolidating.

So, we will get—you know, we spend—we are getting our money. We have to execute, and that is another thing. The increased yield to 60 million is the operation. The organization is operating more professionally with more organized manner because we have to compete with the commercial marketplace to get our package business.

But yes, I'm pretty confident that we have a very deliberate process. We have a long-term plan that sets parameters that we work through and guide. And our investments are reviewed and competed. We are not the same bureaucratic-type of organization we were in the past because we have to move. If I do not get this done, if we do not get this done in a short timeframe, we are going to run out of money.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. I have run over my time. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. If you can have your folks get back to me this time, I would appreciate that.

Mr. DEJOY. I will do that. Thank you, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. And I won't yell at you. Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The distinguished gentleman and Ranking Member of the Committee, the gentleman, Mr. Raskin, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for calling this important hearing.

Mr. DeJoy, more than 2,000 postal carriers have been assaulted or robbed since 2020, and the Postal Service announced just last week that 305 have been targeted since or in the first half of Fiscal Year 2023. So, these incidents, according to the Postal Service, are increasingly becoming more prevalent. The problem is getting more serious.

And yet, despite this increase in crime targeting letter carriers, the Postal Service's announced actions last week to address postal crime seem to me to be very light on proactive protection for letter carriers. The Postal Service's proposal focuses on hardening physical infrastructure, which is, of course, helpful in terms of preventing mail theft, but it really doesn't do anything to help keep the postal workers safer when they are out on the rounds.

One option seemed noticeably absent from the plan that would both reduce mail theft and protect the postal workers, which is to

allow postal police officers to protect the letter carriers by not confining them solely to the physical facilities of the Post Office.

For more than 50 years, the postal police officers have been responsible for protecting customers, property, and employees. But on August 25, 2020, the Postal Service abruptly declared that postal police officers would no longer be allowed to perform patrols to prevent mail theft or to protect letter carriers unless the theft or violation takes place directly on Postal Service premises.

And that just seems baffling to me. Prior to this point, the postal police performed their duties wherever mail theft would occur.

So, Mr. Postmaster, given the increase in attacks on letter carriers that we are hearing about and seeing within our districts and the increase in postal theft, why has the Postal Service continued to prevent postal police officers from doing their jobs and keeping postal workers and our mail safe by traveling to wherever the problem is taking place?

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you. Thank you, Congressman, Ranking Member.

First thing, with regard to the things that we are doing right now, our carriers travel in the line of crime. So, if we reduce crime at these particular locations, we lose the availability to commit crime by stopping the arrow key, hardening the boxes, they will—they will venture into less of these types of activities. And that is one of the reasons that we are looking at proceeding in this manner.

With regard to the postal—

Mr. RASKIN. Could I just follow up on that then? I mean, it seems to me that it is a little counterintuitive if the officers are assigned just to the physical station—

Mr. DEJOY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. And it becomes clear that the letter carriers are exposed—

Mr. DEJOY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. That will deepen their vulnerability to being attacked, robbed on the road, assaulted, and so on.

Mr. DEJOY. So, with regard to the postal police, I mean, I travel the Nation. I enjoy my interactions with the postal police. They are awesome. And if I had 60,000 of them, I would come to you and ask for the authority to do what you are asking us to do.

I do not. I have 600, and I do not have the authority to patrol the streets. And they have not done that in the past. The concept that they were out patrolling the streets, protecting the carriers is not really what was true. It was not authorized to do. We do not have the legal authority to do that.

We did have randomness throughout the country in just about everything that we did before this management team took over, but that is not what their role is. They are not allowed to do that.

Mr. RASKIN. So, OK, you are saying you do not have the statutory authority to—

Mr. DEJOY. That's correct.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. Deploy them to protect the mail routes and letter carriers. I was not aware of that. Because I thought they were doing that before.

Mr. DEJOY. No, no. No, and I also only have 600. And I—the places where they are is where the mail and our people are, right? And this is—you know, this is where they need to be.

Mr. RASKIN. So even if you know that there are certain letter carriers being targeted in particular places out on the road, particular routes that are being subject to organized criminal attacks—

Mr. DEJOY. So, I can assure you, if we know somebody is being targeted, the United States Postal Inspection Service is all over it, and they will also—we have relationships with local task force that help us throughout the—you know, throughout the country and so forth.

We are—you know, it is a big country, and we are a small group. I only have about 600 of those guys, too. But we have established local relationships. We have a good relationships with Federal law enforcement in these areas and also local law enforcement.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Well, good. Well, I hope we can work together to use existing resources that you have to the fullest extent to keep the mail and the letter carriers safe.

And thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

I would now recognize the policy Chairman, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Palmer, for five minutes.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. DeJoy, for being here.

The Postal Service has continued to lose money, and you originally claimed that the Postal Service would break even in 2023, but that obviously has not happened. Do you have a new estimate for when the Postal Service might be able to break even?

Mr. DEJOY. We are trying to reconcile that right now. The reason—there's three reasons, three basic reasons we did not make our targets.

No. 1, CSRS administrative action was in our plan. That was \$3 billion in our current P&L this year. No. 2, inflation was way above what we predicted inflation to be in that plan, and we—although we have been raising prices, it is always in arrears, our inflation, and that is to the tune of \$2 billion.

And then we have tried to, in the middle of the process of doing this, we needed to focus first on getting, you know, keeping service up and getting into a position where we could start making tactical moves like moving significant—we have moved significant amount of volume off of air to ground. It's going to drive about \$1 billion out of our run rate.

So, these are the things—and the place was just a little more broke than we were coming six months into this and do it. But you know, we need to move, and we can get back on track with this. I see where targets of money are for us to get just by improving our operational performance and growing our business. But we are behind. We are not happy with it, but there were significant events that we needed to deal with.

Mr. PALMER. You made some significant changes. Actually, you answered my next question about the impact of inflation, and I guess I also wonder about how things have impacted your work

force participation, having enough people to do the jobs that need to be done. Have you had any difficulty in getting people to work?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, I would say it is different in different functions and areas. Within our plant processing operations, first of all, I have converted—we have converted 125,000 people from pre-career to full-time positions within the United States Postal Service. And that dramatically reduces our turnover rate, and it endears the individual to the organization for long-term career employment.

So, from that standpoint, for the most part, our employee availability today is pretty high. Other than in certain areas that the two-percent that we are having a problem on delivery. Delivery, carriers is our toughest area right now.

Mr. PALMER. You made some pretty significant changes to the Delivering for America plan, and just very briefly, do the changes take into account the probability of a lower volume of regular mail and packages, the potential for a downturn, possibly even a recession in the economy? Have you taken that into account, particularly for the short term?

Mr. DEJOY. So, we do forecast for that. What I would tell you, sir, is we are in the process of repairing a 15-year atom bomb that fell on the place. So, a quarter or two in terms of our long-term strategy is not going to change the infrastructure rehabilitation that we need to do, and we have confidence that in the long run, the country will get through its economic problems, and we will be back to business.

And we need to—the United States Postal Service needs to, and it is in the PSRA, we need to deliver mail and packages together in an integrated manner.

Mr. PALMER. I want to quickly transition to something else, and that has to do with the pensions for your employees. And the Post Office is required, they are limited in what they can invest in to just Federal Treasury bonds, and you have got \$298 billion in assets in the employee pensions.

If you had had the opportunity to have the same investment strategy as the Federal Employees Retirement Plan, Civil Service Retirement Plan, some of the projections I have seen, it could be \$1.2 trillion. And I just—I wonder what the barriers are that keeps the Postal Service from adopting a different model, even the model of the Federal employees, and is this something that we ought to be looking into in this Committee?

Mr. DEJOY. So, this is one of the big, big initiatives that our chairman, Roman Martinez, asked our OIG to take a look at, and it is about—instead of being at a deficit, we'd be at \$700 billion. It changes the whole dynamic of what the organization needs to do. It would be a legislative requirement, just like CSRS was an administrative requirement, the same thing. When we take postal funds, because all our money is raised by selling postal products. And then we have to—we put it into the Federal, you know, Treasury—Federal Treasuries to manage for our retirement.

We have the same thing with CSRS. When the Postal Service was established in 1970, we think like we did not do a very accurate job of accounting for what liabilities should have stayed with the Federal Government and what liabilities they gave to us for our long-term retirement plans. And both of those things would sig-

nificantly change the demands on our cash-flow, which we know—my personal opinion is mail is no longer a monopoly. The delivery of mail is no longer a monopoly, right? It is an obligation.

We have \$40 billion of mail, probably cost us \$65 billion to deliver to 163 million addresses. So, we have to get our fair share of the package business, and that's what we're trying to do in aligning these things. And these are financial burdens that we have that we believe we shouldn't.

So, anything that this Congress can do to address both CSRS reform and any portion, any portion of our retirement investment to have a little more commercial appeal to it would be extremely helpful to the organization's long-term sustainability.

Mr. PALMER. I thank the witness, and I thank the chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time. Thank you very much.

The gentlewoman from Vermont, Congresswoman Balint, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. BALINT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. BALINT. Before my line of questioning, I request unanimous consent to insert into the record an article from Government Executive that appears to run counter to earlier testimony.

Mr. SESSIONS. Without objection, that will be entered into the record.

Ms. BALINT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

According to this article, Mr. DeJoy, the union said it had regularly conducted carrier protection and community policing patrols to ensure the safety of letter carriers and other Postal Service personnel, which seems to run counter to what you said earlier. Do you wish to clarify?

Mr. DEJOY. I stand by my statement. You can pick who you want to believe.

Ms. BALINT. That is all you got?

Mr. DEJOY. That is all I got.

Ms. BALINT. OK.

Mr. DEJOY. What do you want me to say? We have people that say a lot of things about the Postal Service.

Ms. BALINT. Mr. DeJoy, thank you for being here. I appreciate it. I am from a rural state, from Vermont, and I know that the Postal Service is an absolutely essential service not just to Vermont, but to rural America, and protecting the Postal Service is one of my top priorities in Congress.

Now, according to Pew Research, 91 percent of Americans have a favorable view of the Postal Service, which clearly makes it the most popular Federal agency, which is saying a lot. And Vermonters, like my community members, know that their postal workers are working incredibly hard in difficult circumstances to ensure that letters and packages get delivered on time.

And I have talked to many Vermont postal workers and community members. We know that the postal workers are going above and beyond to make sure that our rural communities are getting their letters and packages, and I am very grateful for their hard work. But despite these efforts, Vermonters are still struggling with service delays in mail and packages, and I want us to con-

tinue to work together to make sure that we support postal workers and ensure that Vermonters get their mail on time.

Now my concern is that, Mr. DeJoy, the Delivering for America plan calls for removing back-end operations like letter sorting from most post offices and relocating these operations to massive new sorting and delivery centers. And many Vermonters that I hear from on a regular basis, they fear that the opening of these sorting and delivery centers is a first step toward closing their local post office. So, I am wondering if you can assure the public that your plan will not result in reductions to retail operations or hours of service.

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you. Our plan for the sorting and delivery centers is, in fact, something that is going to save service throughout the Nation. We have a 50-year-old mail delivery operation that is geared for twice the mail—a tenth of the cubic volume with our package deliveries.

Now we need to run mail and packages together, and we also have a terrible transportation system that feeds—

Ms. BALINT. Mr. DeJoy, I am sorry to interrupt. So, I just want to get to the heart of the question, which is will your plan result in reductions to retail operations or hours of service? That is really the question. That is what Vermonters care about.

Mr. DEJOY. So, the rolling out this network will not result in reduction of retail operations.

Ms. BALINT. I appreciate that. Thank you.

The reason why I am so fiercely protective of the Postal Service is because it is not just Vermont. It is rural America that absolutely depends on postal operations. Without continued attention to our rural areas, I really feel that our communities are going to continue to suffer, and this is not good for the democracy. It is not good for our economy. It is not good for rural America.

So, I want to make sure, will you commit to maintaining the size and work hours of the postal work force?

Mr. DEJOY. I do not—I could not possibly commit to something so broad as that. I would not even know how to understand what you are asking me to commit to. We—

Ms. BALINT. Let me rephrase, Mr. DeJoy. Do you understand that rural America is in a different situation with needing postal service?

Mr. DEJOY. So, I understand—so now the question is in context with rural America?

Ms. BALINT. That is exactly my question, which we are making sure that people—

Mr. DEJOY. OK. We—we are, in fact, trying to change rules with our union. So, we are adding people into rural communities because we're well aware that we have problems in staffing in those particular areas. And there is a number of things we are doing with old legacy processes that we have and looking to incentivize people to make deliveries.

And in fact, the S&DC network will enhance that. There are better working conditions. It has further reach. So, there are a lot of good things to that. But the organization is just genetically committed, and it is not just—it is all the way through management

and myself, committed to servicing every address that we are supposed to service.

And we have gone through a tough time financially and a tough time in the Nation with the pandemic. And we are recovering, and we are recovering with a great deal of energy and precision. And we know—we have special measures now on rural areas that are hotspots that deal with just the sound of trouble so we could begin to start working on it.

So, we are very committed. I'm very committed. And rest assured—I mean, we are going to do the best job we can under the current circumstances to continue to serve in these areas.

Ms. BALINT. I appreciate that. I just—I want to just make it really clear that rural America is in a very different situation than many other parts of this country, and we need a vibrant Postal Service regardless of how many individuals are in that area.

So, thank you very much. I appreciate you being here today.

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The gentleman from South Carolina, the gentleman Mr. Timmons is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time to Mr. Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I am not on this Committee. I am not even on the Subcommittee or the full Committee. This issue is so important to me to have an opportunity to talk with you that I wanted to waive on.

I started this process in 2017, when I was contacted by folks in my hometown of Laurens, South Carolina, about our post office there. The Postal Service removed the drive-up boxes completely. They put a mailbox out front where elderly folks have to call in to the post office for folks to come out and retrieve their mail or deliver their mail. I do not know how that is feasible from a personnel standpoint, but the drive-up boxes have been there for a long time.

The second issue is the location of the post office is on a United States highway, U.S. 221. It is at the top of a hill. So, when there is a lot of traffic at that post office, there are a limited number of parking spaces right in front, and they are all full. People are sitting in a U.S. highway, trying to turn in at the top of a hill. It creates a tremendous safety issue. I have got a record of the incidents that have happened there. So, it is an unsafe location.

So, we have asked for consideration of relocating that post office, and in 2018, April 2018—and you acknowledged receipt of that on April 30—a letter was sent to U.S. Postal Service from myself, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, U.S. Senator Tim Scott, the local mayor, the city council chairman, and a number of other constituents, asking for just a meeting to look at that post office, just to come up—some personnel that worked for you, just to come up to Laurens to look at that post office situation and address some of the issues. Maybe the drive-up boxes, maybe the post office itself.

You came and spoke to the Republican caucus a couple of years ago down in the Visitors Center. I met with your Chief of Staff. I handed him a detailed note, whispered in his ear, told him the

issue, and asked for a meeting with U.S. Postal Service personnel in Laurens to address this issue.

I am here today because I have not heard from you guys at all. You refused to meet with me. You refused to have personnel from Atlanta or Columbia come to meet with me. I named two post offices this year. I met with the legislative liaison, people that came up for the post office namings in my district and asked them. We have heard nothing.

So, I am here asking you for a commitment to have personnel from the U.S. Postal Service come and meet with me about an issue that is so important that a United States Senator got involved.

Mr. DEJOY. I think I remember the incident, and from my understanding is you have been given an answer since 2018.

Mr. DUNCAN. That answer is we are not willing to meet with you.

Mr. DEJOY. No, the answer was an explanation of what the situation was and what the changes that you were requesting and that we could not help you.

Mr. DUNCAN. No, sir. The answer was if a customer of the U.S. Postal Service has a complaint, we do not meet with Federal officials. I represent 770,000 Americans who expect their mail—you all have a great job, and you do a tremendous job. But I represent a large constituency that expects me to be their representative with an agency of the Federal Government and at least have a conversation. And you are not even willing to come up and visit and take a look, eyeballs on the situation.

Mr. DEJOY. I will visit with you any time. I do not know if I'm going to go to where you are.

Mr. DUNCAN. You do not have to, but send somebody. Nobody has come to us.

Mr. DEJOY. Sir, I believe we have sent people.

Mr. DUNCAN. No, sir, you have not.

Mr. DEJOY. I believe we have sent people.

Mr. DUNCAN. You have not.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. DUNCAN. Because I would have been there.

Mr. DEJOY. I will take another look. I will take a look at it. I'm thinking I'm recalling this situation, the specific request properly, but I will take a look at it, and I'll call you myself and tell you whether—

Mr. DUNCAN. Will you commit to have somebody come to Laurens and take a look at it on the ground with me, and we can actually walk through the situation there, talk to law enforcement about the issues?

Mr. DEJOY. OK. But that's fine. But I believe—from 2018, there have been a lot of people involved in making decisions about access and postal access before me, right? And I have—I'm trying to transform the organization. I'm assuming—I cannot believe that they have not—they made improper decisions—

Mr. DUNCAN. I will provide you the documentation where they have not, if you would like to see that.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. DUNCAN. Second issue—

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. DUNCAN. I have got a commitment you are going to send somebody. We are going to take a look at it, hopefully with me present. We can look at that issue.

Second issue in my district is Savannah Lakes Village. It is a development. I know you all have a lot of developments. They are building out. U.S. Postal Service actually delivers mail to houses within that development. But new houses that have been built since whatever the date is where a new policy went into play, the postal delivery service drives by houses to deliver to the house next door, but they won't deliver to the new one.

And this development, all the land was sold prior to the rule that you guys had about new houses in the development like that. This should be grandfathered in. There is an issue with trying to build a cluster box, but the Postal Service won't even meet with this group. This is not just a town hall. Just meet with stakeholders and see if we can reach a solution to this.

But I cannot believe that a postal delivery person would drive by a house, deliver mail to the next door, maybe the second house down, but will skip a house that was recently built in a development where the land was all sold prior to the rulemaking of the U.S. Postal Service. Can I get a commitment that you guys will meet with the folks in Savannah Lakes Village? It does not have to be the local postal operators, but nobody will come and have a meeting with stakeholders there.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. So, there's a lot of things you would not believe, right? And there's a lot of requirements on us that I cannot believe, right, that we are trying to straighten out and balance what our service is, what the rules, what the legacy rules are in terms of what we do, and what every individual American wants in terms of service. And it is almost an—you need a magical power to do it, right?

So, why he passes that collection box and so forth, there is probably a rule that says that is what we do.

Mr. DUNCAN. And that is ludicrous. Your guys behind you are shaking their head and—

Mr. DEJOY. Probably. I agree. There is a lot of ludicrous things. I could give you a list 1,000 miles long.

Mr. DUNCAN. I get that, that there are other developments. This is not a unique situation. But something needs to change because Americans expect to have their mail delivered.

I am way over time, Mr. Chairman. But thank you for committing to actually look at some of this with me.

Mr. DEJOY. I will. And I just want to remind you that when we—when we got here, we had \$153 billion negative balance sheet and were losing \$10 billion, \$11 billion, \$12 billion a year.

Mr. DUNCAN. But that postal delivery person is still going into the neighborhood, driving right by a house. How can they not stop? I get it.

Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina.

And Mr. General DeJoy, I was aware of the gentleman this morning. Perhaps this is new or not new, necessarily to you, but I have committed to the gentleman that I will engage your appro-

pritate government relations people and that we will sit down next week.

I think it is important that under whether it is Mr. Mfume or myself, that this Subcommittee personally takes the responsibility to effectively meet with the gentleman from South Carolina and your staff, and so I would ask that you not have to call yourself, but that rather your government affairs people would be in touch with us. We will set up that meeting.

I think part of what you are trying to do is to run a large operation, and what the gentleman from South Carolina is trying to do is to make sure that he effectively deals with you and you with him. So, I would just let you know on the public record, whether it is Mr. Mfume or whether it is myself, we will engage in a positive way to make progress.

And I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his time.

The gentleman yields back his time. Mr. Timmons yields back his time.

The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton, is now recognized for five minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DeJoy, first, I want to note one of my own top Postal Service priorities, helping to prevent mail theft and attacks on Postal Service employees. I have introduced the Postal Service Security Camera Act, which would require that, subject to appropriations, the public service install security cameras at each postal facility to protect Postal Service employees, customers, and property.

So, Mr. DeJoy, would cameras help with the ongoing and highly publicized thefts of mail?

Mr. DEJOY. So, the thefts of mail are not actually happening in our plants and facilities, where cameras would be mostly used. If they were put on the streets over these areas of crime, certainly it would help in terms of investigation. I do not know how much—they do serve as deterrents to crime, sometimes.

So, but I think within our facilities, our plants, we have good visibility of what is going on there. It does not prevent events from happening. It just identifies what happened afterwards. But certainly, cameras on the streets and so forth, which many cities and locales are doing, is—does make criminals think twice, if they are actually thinking that day.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. DeJoy.

I would like to turn to the Postal Service Reform Act now. It allows the Postal Service to enter into agreements with state, local, and tribal governments to provide noncommercial services that provide enhanced value, do not detract from core postal services, and provide a reasonable contribution to public service institutional costs.

This provision is intended to give the Postal Service opportunities to increase revenue and better serve communities as a one-stop shop for certain registration and services. The provision also authorized the Postal Service to experiment with different products. Consistent with existing postal law, the Postal Service currently performs non-postal services for the Federal Government.

Since enactment of the Postal Service Reform Act, the Postal Service has not used this authority. So, Mr. DeJoy, do you think

new authority is an opportunity to provide expanded services to the public, while at the same time bringing in needed revenue?

Mr. DEJOY. So, Congresswoman, I do. There is a step to our rehabilitation process in terms of fixing our number-one revenue generator, which is delivery of mail and delivery of packages and selling more aggressively into the package market. Concurrent with that, we will be starting to look at what do we do with our retail? How do we make our retail environment more vibrant?

We sell now—I mean, I love our Priority Mail bags and Hallmark cards, but that's not going to drive where we need to be to maintain this massive network, and we have a lot of ideas. But with those ideas, needs to come—I need to have those ideas identified, resourced, have a project plan, and so on and so forth. And that is on the table.

We are relooking at our whole salesforce right now in terms of how I align people, the organization to pursue projects so they do not have haphazard starts and go into the wrong time. So, I appreciate the wisdom of the Congress to put that in. I understand what its intention was. But this is a journey for us. That is a new initiative, and I can assure you that we will have resources dedicated trying to figure out just how we capitalize on the opportunity.

Ms. NORTON. So, what kinds of non-postal services might the Postal Service pilot or explore?

Mr. DEJOY. So, I think one of the things that has been—the way I look at it, we have an infrastructure, and it is everywhere, right? And it has a front door, and it has arms and legs attached to it that could take something anywhere and so forth. It could be used to meet. It could be used to stock products. It could be used like we did in the kit program, the COVID test kit program that we worked—where we delivered 700 million COVID test kits. That was using our particular network.

Once you have a—you know, the ability to have infrastructure in these areas, what are, in fact, the services that one could provide? We know we already have digital identity. We know we already have—you know, we do passports. But there's a lot of different types of services that the communities can use that we would be interested in looking at within the framework of what our regulatory responsibility is.

And with the—with the vision that business breeds business, activity brings activity, and so forth. It is just—it is something we are in our infant stages of looking at. How do we repurpose our whole retail network so it re-establishes as vibrant? So, we are looking at shared workplaces with small businesses. We are looking at lockboxes. We are looking at stocking crucial infrastructure, critical parts, and product deliveries for hospitals and service centers and so forth.

There is a lot that we can do, and just looking at some of the service that are needed in the commercial marketplace, but are less available in some of these other locations. I think that is a good role for us to play with our physical distribution capabilities and our retail stature and presence everywhere. And we are going to—we are going to chase after this stuff.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Fry, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing today.

And much like the gentleman from South Carolina earlier, my focus today will be very localized. Mr. Postmaster General, I want to say thank you for the work that you are doing. I really appreciate you being here today.

We have been in communication recently. There is a post office that was burned down in Longs, South Carolina, in 2021 in June, and at that time, the Post Office or the USPS committed to completing a finished replacement of that post office by early this year. If you look at the site as it stands now, nothing is there.

There are mail trucks that facilitate as much as they can, but there is nothing there. There is no building. There is not even a breaking of ground at that site. And we had reached out very early with some frustration, quite frankly, that we were not getting—look, one of the roles that we have, and when I was in the state legislature, if I called an agency, somebody would get back to me within 24 or 48 hours. Our role is to facilitate accurate information to the people that we represent.

And, quite frankly, for a little bit there, we were not getting anywhere with your staff about what was going on, what was causing these delays? Why has ground not been broken? Why make a commitment in 2021 to a completed post office in early this year, and we have not even started?

And so we are trying to facilitate that information. So, I do appreciate last week your office responding to a letter that we had written, informing us that a lease was recently executed for the construction of a new post office. Do you know of any instances other than Longs, South Carolina, where offices have been destroyed or damaged and not rebuilt in a timely manner?

Mr. DEJOY. Sir, I could not list specifics, but there are a lot of instances that existed at—around the organization that were conditions that resulted from events, from neglect, from time, and so forth, and there is a long, long list of things we need to fix. And so, I'm not going to articulate them all here, but I can give you—I have \$7 billion of deferred maintenance, \$7 billion of deferred maintenance.

So, you know, and we also did not have money in 2020. So, but I'm glad we have it under lease, and I'll take a look at that when I get back to the office, and we will see if we could move it along, right?

Mr. FRY. No, I appreciate that. And I think we will go over some other stuff here with my remaining time, but to me, facilitating accurate information and being a help to constituents is my top priority. And I know that I share that with other people, particularly as Ms. Balint said from Vermont, particularly within rural communities.

Right now, there are some complaints about them not getting the service that they need. And so, how we can fix that, how we can partner together is absolutely crucial because we want to be that resource for our constituents. We want to make the post office look good, but that communication requires two people, right? And if it

is just coming from our offices and not with you, that is a big problem.

Recently, the mayor of Marion, South Carolina, contacted my office. And this is completely different, changing lanes here. And here is an excerpt of the letter that he sent: "With USPS permission, the city of Marion would go in and dig up all the old plants in front of the property at our expense. We have an excellent garden club in Marion. The ladies in the group have advised me that they would be happy to replant the area."

Look, I think the underlying issue here is that they want to make their town look beautiful, right? And so, they are not getting—I guess there is an existing policy that would prohibit clubs or organizations from beautifying the USPS property. Is that in existence and why?

Mr. DEJOY. Sir, we had 900 policy manuals that have not been updated in 30 years, in the process of going—going through them right now. What I would say is, I'm aware of the communication problems that we have had from the field back up to headquarters. I have reorganized to eliminate that, to have direct communication from our headquarters right down in authority and responsibility, and we're working on making those changes.

We're also working on improving our voice with all our constituents and stakeholders. That is something that is—I see it—I'm the number-one critic of our organization. You just go over to headquarters and ask them. But we are making great changes in that, but it is going to take time to make itself, you know, through the whole—you know, the whole country.

And it is unfortunate the way, as you move into areas that are less concentrated, we seem to—it seems to be the last one impacted on these things.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for your time. And Mr. Chairman, just briefly, in conclusion, I would welcome the opportunity—there are several other local issues that I have, that have been expressed to me. I would welcome the opportunity to work with your staff to at least get good information on a policy that exists, a problem with performance maybe, whatever the case is, but our role is to advocate and help further those discussions and to get our constituents accurate information as to why.

And so, if we can continue that dialog, as evidenced by your recent letter to me, I would really appreciate that.

Mr. DEJOY. Sure. And my government relations person, Peter Pastre, is here and would be happy to reach out to you.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, sir.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

I would like to note on both sides of this aisle, we have taken the time to effectively, professionally provide our feedback, and I want to say thank you to the Members for maintaining that high level of professionalism, along with the Postmaster General in his response. And I thank them and recognize that.

Now the gentleman yields back his time.

Then now we would go to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Casar.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Postmaster General, for being here.

I am a brand-new Member of Congress, and here in the first few months, I expected to get lots of emails and notes about healthcare trying to navigate—or about veterans trying to navigate the healthcare system, expected to get lots of notes of folks trying to navigate the immigration system. But what I have been surprised by has been the number of letter carriers and postal workers reaching out directly to my office about concerns in their workplace.

I had asked my staff coming up to this hearing to start giving me a summary, and the list was longer than what I could put in five minutes. So, I asked just for five examples of constituents who are Federal employees, who are USPS employees about their issues.

One of them, a worker having an allergic reaction, potentially with life-threatening consequences, being pushed to go out and deliver the mail in the midst of that allergic reaction.

Second, people reaching out being injured on the job and not—and their supervisor approving continuation of their pay. But then, as that request went further up the food chain, that request being denied.

Third, a postal worker in San Antonio sending us photos of him holding a thermometer in his vehicle, and the thermometer showing 136 degrees.

Fourth, a constituent reaching out, saying that they had been injured on the job as a postal worker, an injury that required surgery, and them reaching out to us trying to get help because they were not able to get help at their workplace getting that surgery covered.

Fifth, workers having their real concerns about ADA spots being removed at their workplace, and they being workers that rely on those parking spaces with disabilities.

And the list goes on and on and on. And obviously, those are really concerning issues to me because not only is it the right thing for us to do to provide a great workplace for all Federal employees, but we know it affects the mail.

And so, could you comment, Postmaster General, on what it is you are hearing? Are these issues that are really just affecting my office, or do you see these things as more systemic and something that your office is trying to take on?

Mr. DEJOY. So the consequence of 15 years of bad legislation, dramatic change in the economy, a Great Recession, the reduction of mail, and no money in the organization put stresses throughout the whole organization, which deteriorated just about every relationship, piece of equipment, individual, and it all winds up, the biggest impact comes down to the people that are working in the plants and delivering the mail, right? We are all stressed. That is the way it is, and that is the organization I came into.

I can tell you that we have made tremendous gains in trying to work through that, and that is what the Delivering for America plan is, in fact, doing. It is improving our operations, improving our dialog.

I've spoken myself to 8,000 supervisors about if you—when you are thinking, when you are talking to your people, right, treat them like you want to be treated. When you are giving them direction, OK, when you are disciplining them, when you are having a

bad day, these are conversations I had with our supervisors. Because there was a tension throughout the organization that had—was allowed to develop because of the conditions.

Mr. CASAR. And I appreciate that you all are taking it on. And again, I want to—

Mr. DEJOY. So, so to get to the—you know, four of the five things I do not think are systemic. I believe they could happen. We are continuing to work on training on these types of interactions. There is confusion in a lot of the work rules. But I think systemically, we are improving, and most people come to work each day, do their jobs, have good interactions with their management, and they go home.

But we do have these types of issues. The one situation, the situation with the vehicle, yes, we know that is an issue. That is why I've been trying to buy vehicles for two years now.

Mr. CASAR. Good. And in Texas, where somebody could show a 136-degree thermometer—

Mr. DEJOY. We are on our way.

Mr. CASAR [continuing]. I hope that we will be able to say that that is not OK.

Mr. DEJOY. Well, it is—it is—

Mr. CASAR. Mr. DeJoy, just because I am running out of time. I appreciate and I want to make sure that our next conversation, we could actually lay out what it is that we are getting done so that we can be responsive to people.

Some numbers shown to me by my team were that for noncareer employees, we used to have a turnover rate of 40 percent. That is climbing higher up. I hope that we are able to address that.

Again, I do not know if the number—I would be interested in you verifying the number. Folks in my San Antonio office relaying to me that two out of every three new employees are turning over before the end of the year in the San Antonio office. Again, if those are not right, would want to hear that. But if they are, would want to know that we are trying to intervene to make sure that we are retaining employees, moving them over to those career positions, as you noted today, and making things better.

Mr. DEJOY. That—that is a statistic that is not representative of what this management team has done, OK? When we came—I've converted—we have converted 125,000 pre-career people to full time. First of all, they were called noncareer when I got them. We changed the name, called them pre-career, and converted them.

Now we are coming off of the pandemic—these numbers, the way they are calculated, many people get these out of the OIG report. I have 650,000 employees. They sampled 100 people, sampled 100 people. This is the type of statistics I need to deal with.

Mr. CASAR. Understood. And would love to dig in with you. For example, in that San Antonio office, if we are having two-thirds of new employees turn over before the end of the year, then we could probably agree let us try to do something about it now.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, sir.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you. Appreciate you.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The distinguished gentleman, Mr. Edwards, from North Carolina, is recognized.

Mr. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. DeJoy, thanks for being with us this afternoon, and thanks for your service to our country.

I cannot think of many positions one might hold in our Federal Government that would be less enviable than yours. I can tell you that while the Postal Service is not a perfect system, I know many of the hard-working men and women back at home that serve the Postal Service, and I know them to be professional, dedicated, hard-working people that operate in obviously an imperfect system.

I would like to turn our attention to elections for just a moment. With the heightened emphasis on absentee ballots or mail-in ballots, whatever a state wants to call those, particularly through the pandemic, and many of the aspects of our election system being called into question, the Postal Service has been called into question. And I know in serving in the North Carolina legislature, that we have attempted on a number of occasions to pass legislation that says there has to be a time that there is a cutoff to receive absentee ballots.

North Carolina, just a couple of years ago, extended that to nine days, which in many folks' eyes creates question. And so, our effort has been to eliminate the question about when the cutoff should be and pass legislation that says that an absentee ballot should be received by a board of elections by the close of business on an Election Day.

But unfortunately, there are a lot of people out there that say that the Post Office is so incompetent that they would be disenfranchising voters if we had a cutoff time. What could I take back to those folks to give them confidence in our system that the Postal Service is, in fact, capable of allowing states legislators to create a specific deadline?

Mr. DEJOY. So, I want to be careful here. I'm not opining on any rules or anything, but I'm going to tell you about the United States Postal Service and their performance in elections. And we have had very, very good performance in elections, and the people—and this, this was before I got here.

The organization was committed to delivering—and the people see a ballot on the floor in a plant, they dive on it to get it delivered. What we have done, as we improve our processes, which we have, where significantly the overall mail system, the flow through of ballots is, in fact, better. We have set up a separate organization to monitor this all year long and interact with different agencies.

And we have been the most consistent thing in the election process for the last 10 years. States and election boards change all the time, change the rules. So, if we get a mail ballot in time, we will deliver it in time, 99-point-whatever percent of the time.

And I would suggest, like we have said when we give counsel on this, mail it a week in advance. Let us not wait until the last minute. You are going to send your mother a Mother's Day card, and you want her to get it on Mother's Day, you do not send it the day before.

So, from that standpoint, that's what we looked at. We have worked with the previous Chair and the Committee on a standard mail piece for elections with barcodes. That would be something that is—how do you want to—I cannot pay for it. The Postal Serv-

ice cannot pay for it. So, how do you implement something like that?

But I think from the standpoint, as you have seen, historically, that we are pretty reliable in getting it done, and we will get more reliable because our whole system is going to get more reliable as we roll out the rest of the processes in the DFA plan.

Mr. EDWARDS. Thank you for that. Can you tell us, are there any specific procedures that are changed during an election to handle absentee ballots?

Mr. DEJOY. That are changed just for an election?

Mr. EDWARDS. Right.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, it is—so we have a number of different agreements with different courts and so forth that we have decided. But it really comes down to that we put more emphasis on hunting for the ballot if we get our hands on it. It is called “extraordinary measures,” and we do keep post offices open later. We do more trips. We do whatever that we—we do more of everything. It is just a matter of moving mail and packages.

We coordinate with some offices where to bring stuff. We do some turnaround in the post office that we normally would not do. I mean, one of the big misunderstandings all the time is the postmark. We do not postmark everything, and a lot of places think that we do, and that is—so we try and postmark a little more and so forth.

So, there is a heightened awareness. Our board, we have a committee, a board committee that kicks in, looks, chaired by Governor McReynolds. We have part of our organization that I set up when I came in that is standing all year round, not just for elections, to coordinate specific issues. So, we have it in advance. And we do go the extra mile to make sure during the elections that every ballot we could possibly deliver on, rescue, we do.

Mr. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. DeJoy, and thank you for your service.

Mr. Chair, I yield.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The distinguished gentlewoman from New Mexico, Ms. Stansbury, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. STANSBURY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

And thank you, Mr. DeJoy, for being here with us today.

I want to start out by thanking all of our USPS staff. I see some of your staff sitting behind you, but of course, all of our postal workers and letter carriers not only in my district, but across the country, who day in, day out deliver the mail across all of our communities and are really the backbone of our communities.

I represent New Mexico’s First congressional District, which includes the Albuquerque metro area and over a half dozen rural communities, and issues around rural postal service are really crucial for the communities that I represent. In particular, as we have been heading into this hearing, we have been hearing from a lot of our letter carriers about issues around new policies the Postal Service is implementing around rural compensation. And so, I want to focus my attention especially on these issues.

The first question I want to ask you, Mr. DeJoy, is how much consultation the Postal Service did with rank-and-file rural letter carriers before deciding to implement this policy?

Mr. DEJOY. The recent policy on rural carrier pay adjustment?

Ms. STANSBURY. Yes.

Mr. DEJOY. About 10 years' worth.

Ms. STANSBURY. Can you please characterize that? Because what we heard from folks who work in our district is that they did not find out about it until it was actually being implemented.

Mr. DEJOY. So, the—this was a decision that was made in 2012 through arbitration between the union and the Postal Service, and we worked for seven, eight—I think by 2019 we had the structure of it decided, how it was going to be rolled out.

We did a sampling that year of 4,000 routes and came up with some adjustments that needed to be made, and then in consultation with the union, our H.R. department, we began to roll the process out to across the Nation. So, from my—I do not know that every single detail as to how this got communicated, but it was not—I cannot imagine it was not effectively communicated to everybody.

Now the result of it is, you know, is unfortunate the result of it because a lot of it has resulted in the aggregation of mail decline over 10 years impacting the rural carrier at one shot.

Ms. STANSBURY. And Mr. DeJoy, you know, I think among the many concerns, in addition to, in fact, what you just highlighted about not knowing how it was communicated down to the rank-and-file, is the impact that it is going to have on rural carrier pay. Are you aware that 66 percent of our carriers are actually going to lose pay in their paychecks because of this adjustment?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, I am. And what I said was, I mean, I'm aware of my H.R. department and the union representatives working to deliver the message across the ranks of the organization. I'm not aware of the specific detail of what they were—was said. And yes, that—

Ms. STANSBURY. But finally, Mr. DeJoy—I apologize for interrupting, but because there is short time. I think that something of this significance that is going to affect 66 percent of our rural carriers and rural coverage of our mail service, certainly the tone gets set at the top, and how that gets communicated, it affects the livelihoods of our carriers. It affects our communities. It affects local economies.

So, my question is, in addition to improving communications with the staff of the Postal Service, what plans has USPS put into place to ensure that this does not affect recruitment and retention of carriers as well as actual service delivery in our rural areas?

Mr. DEJOY. So, we have worked with our union leadership, and we are, you know, continuing with our recruiting aspects, which have been, you know, significantly enhanced. I do not believe that—not to minimize anything. I do not believe the cut is 60 percent on it, and I believe that all the participants were told and know that this has been coming.

It is an unfortunate consequence. But on the same token, you know, we need to align the compensation for the work that is being done. And that is, in fact, what—

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. DeJoy, while I appreciate your business approach to the solvency issues of the Postal Service, our postal workers are members of our communities. They need a living wage. They need safe working conditions. We need to ensure the livelihoods of our communities.

And part of the job, as a Federal agency, is to ensure that we are adequately paying and ensuring the safety and safe working conditions of our workers. And I do want to note that the issues that Mr. Casar brought up are systemic. Because I hear about them every day—of our postal workers' unsafe working conditions, crime issues, being out alone, long hours, not enough postal workers.

And so, these policy changes that are being implemented at the top and not adequately communicated and consulted with the rank-and-file letter carriers are a problem in our communities. And so, Mr. DeJoy, I appreciate your service, but it is crucial that we make sure that our postal workers on the ground have a voice, that they are communicated with clearly, and that we are supporting our postal workers.

And with that, I yield back.

Mr. DEJOY. So, I disagree with the premise, and I can assure you that—

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman—excuse me, General. Excuse me, General. The gentlewoman has yielded her time back.

Do you wish for the gentleman to extend your time to receive an answer back from the General?

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, that is at your discretion.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, I am willing to give the gentlewoman—I think the gentleman does not seek that time. Thank you very much.

Mr. DeJoy, when a Member yields back their time—

Mr. DEJOY. Got it.

Mr. SESSIONS [continuing]. That time ends, and I appreciate it. I thank the gentlewoman. She yields back the time.

The distinguished gentleman, the Chairman of the full Committee, Chairman COMER, is recognized for five minutes.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Postmaster General, it is good to see you here today. I know we talk often. We have talked often over the past year and a half. We have come a long way in really, what I consider, one of the most, if not the most, bipartisan accomplishments last year in the Congress, certainly in this Committee, and that was passing the postal reform bill.

As I said then, and I will say it again now, I think you are the right person for the job. You have taken a lot of bullets, and it is a tough job. It is a big bureaucracy. You do something that no one in the private sector wants to do, and that is deliver the mail six days a week to every single address in America.

I would like to talk about one of the centerpieces of your plan has been the network modernization. And with respect to your plan, you are the only Postmaster General since I have been in Congress that even came up a plan to reform. The last—your predecessor always talked about a plan but never came up with one. I like to remind people about that.

But one of the centerpieces of your plan is the network modernization, and that, as I understand it, involves constructing large facilities in urban areas and running your network from that to a smaller number of facilities.

Could you help me understand what the benefit of this will be in terms of savings, manpower needs, improved performance, et cetera?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, sir. So, first of all, thank you for your leadership and partnership in passing the legislation. It was a really wonderful thing to be a part of and long overdue. So, I thank you for your leadership.

Right now, when we look at national distribution, we move mail and packages to 420 different locations that have been haphazardly put together over the last 15 years. We want to—and that disaggregates mail. It creates 55,000 trucks a day that run across the country at 30 percent full, and plus, we were flying a lot of air, doing a lot of air.

So, we are collapsing this—aggregating this into 60 locations, converting those other locations, if they were contractors, insourcing a tremendous amount of work. But at the end of the day, we had a \$10.6 billion transportation budget. I plan to get \$3 billion to \$4 billion out of that. We have a significant amount of adjunct labor, nonproductive labor in these accessorial places and a significant amount of overtime. I plan to get \$3 billion to \$4 billion out of that.

And then there are other types of operations. Our local transportation to feed our delivery units has not been addressed in 40 years. It is different. We are going to fix that, and there is a couple of billion there.

Chairman COMER. With respect to the facilities that will not be used, what are you going to do with those?

Mr. DEJOY. So, as I said, I have not adequately articulated that this is not a consolidation. We have built up a number of leased annexes over the last—and contractor sites and took little functions that could not fit in an existing plant and put them in there, right? Those are the places that we are closing out.

All our postal facilities, I'm investing significantly in, bringing them back up to stay, putting the right equipment in them, redoing employee amenities. You are going to have—we have 226 locations local processing centers that will be fed from these 60 processing centers, and then we are going back to all these plants that were closed down over the last 10 years and reinvigorating them and putting our sorting and delivery centers in.

And we are modernizing the way the distribution needs to be today for the cubic volume that we move, right? Today, 60, 65 percent of the cubic volume we move are packages. It is not little letters. Yet we still run the place like we are moving letters, and then we rehandle all the packages. So that is what we are trying to redo.

It is pretty, actually, I wish I could say it is ingenious. It is not. It is obvious.

Chairman COMER. Right. And with that, this is my last question, and feel free to take all the time you need to answer it because I think it is an important question. The Postal Reform Act that we

passed provided you with an infusion of cash, and we changed some of the liability that was strapped on the Post Office. This was, in my opinion, the last-ditch effort to try to put the Postal Service in a position to where it can do what it is supposed to do, and that is be self-sustaining.

Now with mail volume continuing to decline, how do you see this moving forward in the future to where we can get to a position of self-sustainability within the Postal Service? Because I have been on record many times. I support the Post Office. My colleagues on the Republican side, we all have concerns with certain aspects of the Postal Service. But as a Democratic Member mentioned, it is very important in rural America, and no private company wants to deliver mail six days a week in rural America.

So, what is the future with respect to the fact that we are going to continue to see declining mail volume? How can we get the Postal Service to where it is in a position of sustainability to where Congress will not have to infuse any more cash in the future?

Mr. DEJOY. How much time are you going to give me?

Chairman COMER. However much time the Chairman will allow.

Mr. DEJOY. So just—and I certainly appreciate your help. I just want to be clear. From my standpoint of coming in and changing the organization and what cash became available and what was being infused into the organization, we did not—the PSRA did not give us an infusion of cash, right? We had not paid that liability in over 10 years, right?

It just kind of straightened out the old legislation, and in fact, it pushed the—what we were obligated to pay to six or seven years from now, right? We will eventually go to a pay-as-you-go system. So that is what I'm racing. If we get back to a pay-as-you-go system, we are going to have a big problem if we do not make these changes that we are making, that we are trying to make right now.

As you know—and this was a contentious issue on the bill—an integrated mail and package network, right? There is two things. There is two inefficiencies within the Postal Service. The inefficiency of how we run the place, which was all over the place. We got to fix that, right, and get at it.

And there is a lot money there, and there is a lot of better working conditions for everybody that works there. I mean, who would have put together a process that handles 25 million packages a day by hand? By hand, right? So, these are the things that we are fixing. We will root out those issues. There is a lot of money there, as I described.

But the mission is still inefficient. That is the other inefficiency, the mission. Delivering to 163 million addresses, whether you have 1 piece of mail or 10 packages and so forth. That we have to do, and we commit to do it. But we have to do that efficiently, by moving packages and mail together, aggregated network, as was in the bill. We will leverage our costs, leverage our conveyor system to every address. That will produce better margins in the overall performance, and I believe we can become the preferred delivery provider in the Nation, and garner a good part of the package business, be the greenest thing from an environmental standpoint.

I do not believe the American people want 50 trucks running up and down their neighborhood streets, even in rural America. And

that, if we grow our package business, which we will or we are, I think that is—you know, I need to get \$2 billion to \$3 billion of package revenue, get these costs out that I identified, and I need to do it quick. I need to do it quick, and I think we are close. We are close to solving these things.

Now there are other areas. We have a lot of unfunded mandates. We have brought up the retirement thing and so forth. This is not a walk in the park. But it is a close, and I will be able to tell you what exactly operationally is too costly to do, and we might have to come up with something else on that part. But we are full steam ahead on trying to get this done.

And my hope is our regulator, the Congress, gets out of our way because this is a crisis, and we need to move. And taking surveys from every opinion, as our regulator wants to do, what it is that we should do and flooding our airwaves with proven methodologies that have not worked in the past is not helpful.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman, the distinguished Chairman, yields back his time.

The gentleman from Massachusetts, my friend Mr. Lynch, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Ranking Member.

Mr. Postmaster General, welcome.

Mr. DEJOY. Sir.

Mr. LYNCH. I do not think I have seen you since the swearing in—

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. Yes.

Mr. LYNCH [continuing]. The signing ceremony at the White House on the postal reform bill, which you were very helpful with. You played a key role in getting that, and I had the opportunity to work on that for about 10 years. So certainly happy to see that in the rearview mirror.

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you, sir.

Mr. LYNCH. I wanted to talk to you about a piece of unfinished business. So, I actually had offered an amendment to the Jobs and Infrastructure Act to provide money for the Postal Service to modernize its fleet. I think you would get like 237,000 vehicles. I think, besides DOD, you are No. 1. And many of those are what they call long-life. I think that is the term they use for those vehicles, where they are supposed to have like a 20-year shelf life, but I think some of them are already over 30.

Mr. DEJOY. That is right.

Mr. LYNCH. So, we did provide in the Inflation Reduction Act, we provided \$3 billion in funding, and I know that in December, you committed to ensuring that about 75 percent of the next-generation delivery vehicles, which is roughly 66,000 vehicles, would be electric vehicles. And this is big not just for the Postal Service, but bringing the charging infrastructure into some of our rural communities and suburban communities, as well as major cities. I just wanted to see if I could get a little update from you on where we are on the fleet modernization program?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, sir. So, thank you. And thank you for assistance in both the legislation and also on the vehicle funding.

As you know, in December, we made—we had been—you know, we came out with 10 percent because we did not have a strategy to change our infrastructure, and our delivery units could not take on this. I'd be afraid to plug a coffee pot in some of these places, let alone take a—we then moved forward after we passed the reform bill, the financial projections looked a little better.

And then the—because the capital and the benefit of it from a financial standpoint did not come close in terms of implementation where we were. After the \$3 billion, I went to the—I do not know if you know this—I met with the White House to figure out, with John Podesta, to figure out in a different environment, figure out, all right, we need to move forward. With our mission in mind, how do we use these moneys effectively to keep us in a stable rate?

I need to commit long out. I have to put these at over 1,000 facilities, right? So, and so forth. So, we came up with a plan how to use the infrastructure money that was agreeable and use the vehicle money.

We will start receiving electric vehicles, the first of the commercial off-the-shelf, 40 transits, will start coming in December of this year or January, 10,000 over the next—they are left-hand drive, I need more right-hand drive. But those will get us going.

Then, in the end of 1924, we'll start seeing—the end of 1924, but 1925, 1926, and 1927, 20,000 a year on the NGDVs, all electric. Our first 15,000 will be ICE vehicles, which will come in toward the end of this year and into next. But then it is all, it is 100 percent electric vehicles.

On the infrastructure, I already have it underway. We have close to 100 sites that will take about 100 vehicles each, and it is our old plants, our old plants that were closed down. You have the old postal family, you know, the old plants that were closed down. What they have, they already have 5,000 amps in them already and big parking lots with VMFs. And we are reopening up, retooling, and putting the money in to create the—put the charging stations in. I already ordered 14,000 charging stations. We have them in stock at Topeka in case there is a supply chain crunch.

So, we are moving out, and those 66,000, as they come off the line, we are going to have homes for them, and we are going to put them in where the carriers are. It might be—I have a parking lot for the first 1,000 in case the whole infrastructure is not ready, but I have a new team on it that has aggregated all the different functionality, and we are going to really lead the Nation in this rollout. And it is pretty exciting to be part of.

Mr. LYNCH. That is great. Well, one thing I would just want to say at the end—my time is almost up here. The pattern of use for the postal vehicles, you know, you charge overnight, right, and then you roll out in the morning. And for the balance of the day until those vehicles come back, you have got open charging stations. And I just want you to think about whether the public might be able to have access to those stations, those charging stations if it did not interfere with the postal operations. It might be a great benefit to the general community in which you are located.

Mr. DEJOY. So, the—you know, we have discussed that. I know you have been interested, and other members here, in the type of device and where it is located and when we charge. But I think the

point is, as I was saying earlier with regards to Congresswoman Norton, we have an infrastructure. Whether it requires a different type of charging station, if there is a—this is a way that we can, you know, be more present in the community, we will take a look at that. But we first got to get our thing going—

Mr. LYNCH. Right, right.

Mr. DEJOY [continuing]. Because this is a monumental task that we are undertaking right now.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

And thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Chairman. I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time. Thank you very much.

The distinguished gentleman, my friend from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Postmaster General DeJoy, we have met many times. It occurred to me, I was looking at when you were sworn in, and this must have been the longest three years of your life.

Mr. DEJOY. I was born in Brooklyn, so that was long, too.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HIGGINS. I think you have earned an epitaph said, "This guy never quit." You have hung in there, but I have to say, some of the changes, I realize that you are dealing with quite a complex machine. But some of the changes really are beyond from a perspective of commonsense. They are beyond understanding.

Like moving, shifting mail to your major hubs. Looking at it on a map, and so I guess it looks like a good idea from that perspective. But when you get down to the reality of taking a piece of mail that is scheduled to be delivered half a mile away from a post office and sending that mail 100 miles away to a hub to have it distributed to come back, these are the kind of things that when they are pointed out, they make no sense. But I have to say that I believe that, from my perspective, your biggest problem is regulations. You have been regulated to death.

And let me point out regarding money, in 1980, a stamp was 18 cents. It is 63 cents now. So, you have gone up 45 cents for a stamp. But in 1980, America's total debt was \$1 trillion. It is \$32 trillion now. So, Congress is in no position to look at the Post Office and say your rates have gone up too much. You are receiving a tremendous amount of American treasure through direct budgeting and appropriation, but it seems to me that your problems come from regulation.

So, I ask you candidly if you had the regulatory requirements of 1980 and the rates and budget of 2023, how fast could you fix your problems?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, sir—and one quick point on the logistics behind moving the mail is—has to deal with volume aggregation and so forth. So that is why that process—

Mr. HIGGINS. But setting that aside, Mr. DeJoy, you say you have a list, 1,000 pages of rules you have to follow, right?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes.

Mr. HIGGINS. You were talking about why a mail carrier and he cannot deliver to a house right next to another house. I talked to

an old guy, retired, he said—he said, Clay, used to be maps and mailboxes determined routes and deliveries. It was pretty much that simple.

And obviously, if a new resident had established a mailbox at their home, they would just be added to the route in that area. It was a decision made at the branch. It did not require committee studies and tremendous regulatory review. It was just a common-sense decision. Someone moved into the neighborhood. They have a mailbox. They would get added to that route.

If you had that kind of command and control, I would just think a guy like you could fix a lot of these problems to get the Post Office busting even. I have to ask you about electric vehicles, though.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. HIGGINS. I was not going to bring it up, but my friend Mr. Lynch did. I think this may be the worst idea in the history of bad ideas. I think we are going to look back on this—I mean, utility vehicles must be robust and rugged. You have to have—obviously, a postal delivery vehicle goes through a lot. And as you observe American citizens that have electric cars, they are really casual-use vehicles.

For instance, no professional hauler or tower—if you tow boats, for instance—it is not going to have an electric truck. You cannot go 70, 80 miles with it. So how do you intend to make that work in your most rugged environments across the postal system?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, that's a good point. Thank you for that question. It was one of the reasons why we came out with only a 10 percent acquisition in the beginning, and it was a—right? But I think we have come to a point where we have carved out the right—we know every single route and what its applicability is, right?

The durability of the vehicle is the same, and we know every route where and what type of conditions. And at the end of the day, from the way a vehicle works today, electric vehicle, and what our route system is all over the—up to Alaska and everything, we would never get—only about 70 percent of them would be—we would only get to about 70 percent of the routes. And then there is different—different levels of return on electric vehicles.

That 66,000 that we are moving in right now, we got the sweet spot of sweet spots in terms of where they are going to go, in terms of where they are going to be resident in these facilities, and I think it is going to work—I mean, I did not come in waving electric—you know, but—

Mr. HIGGINS. That makes sense.

Mr. DEJOY [continuing]. I think we are in a good place.

Mr. HIGGINS. That makes sense. Mr. DeJoy, my time has expired. Thank you for your service.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time. Thank you very much.

The gentlewoman from Dallas, Texas, Ms. Crockett, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Today's hearing is one of those moments where both sides of the aisle want to come together and figure out what we can do to fix the problems that exist within the Postal Service. And so, I want to be clear that I support the Postal Service.

I have talked a lot about my mom because she currently works for the IRS. But when I was a little girl, she worked at the post office, and so she got her introduction into Federal service at the post office. She worked as a part-timer. She was a mail handler. She worked her way up and ended up in HR. So, she kind of understands so many different levels of the post office.

But as a Member of Congress, I get the calls about the concerns. And so, I want to just kind of put some things into perspective really quickly. I remember when I was growing up, as a little girl I was taught how to write letters, something that I do not know is going on now in schools, but the difference was when I was growing up, we did not have the Internet. Not when I was a little girl.

And so, it is my perception that once the Internet came along—because I know I stopped sending as many letters—people started using things like email instead. And what I feel as if is going on with the Post Office is a lack of agility to adapt to a changing environment.

And so I am curious to know, and it is really to follow up a little bit more on what Chairman Comer was asking about, is as we are thinking about the future of the Post Office, what are the out of the box thoughts that we have as we are looking at the fact that we didn't have the Internet before, which meant that every time you wanted to put something in writing to someone, you literally were either trying to do a telegram, a fax, or you were actually just sending a letter. And I think the preference was to send letters, right? But as you have acknowledged, that is not where the bread and butter is for the Post Office.

As someone who also lived in east Texas, which is a little bit more rural than Dallas, I understand how thinly stretched you all are. But what are your thoughts? I mean, and when I am asking this, I am asking about, I do not know if there has been thoughts about the potential of drones or whatever technologies may be available, which then would not only reduce the carbon footprint but also would make sure that you are not needing the level of staff that is necessary to kind of do some of those routes.

I did have a chance to sit down with the postmaster in my area to talk about some of these things. He has talked about the difficulties that he has had with hiring. He has talked about some of the things that have been brought up as it relates to the crime that has happened with a lot of postal workers. And so, I am curious about that.

And also, and finally, I will kind of end on this note and allow you to kind of elaborate on your thoughts. But in my district, UPS, I believe it is—they are going to get me if I am wrong—but they are now doing autonomous vehicle testings in a route. And so, I know that those that I would consider to be competitors of the Post Office seemingly are already, you know, 50 years ahead of us in kind of like what they are doing.

And so, if we are going to be, say, the preferred provider as it relates to packages, like are you looking at what the competition

is doing as it relates to FedEx and UPS and trying to figure out how do we stay or even get kind of on the playing field with them? And I will allow you because I am just curious about the future.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. Well, thank you. Thank you for those thoughts.

First, Congresswoman, we are about 15 years behind in every operating and modern-day technology and logistics thing that we do, and we have to—that is our bread—and we have to get our mainstream business working right, which is moving mail and packages across the country and delivering to the American people together. And there is a huge, huge benefit for us in terms of cost and revenue and a big benefit to the American people in terms of timely service into the rural communities and so on and so forth. That is job No. 1. We have a broken operating model and a broken business model.

The second thing is, in terms of how do we reimagine our retail centers around the Nation that will be able to build on this increasing commerce. We will become, if we pull this off, an enabler of commerce, right, and things will get delivered that do not get delivered now because it is from the Postal Service. And there will continue to be a growth in home delivery, in e-commerce, and so on and so forth.

And we are there. We are pursuing a number of different issues with that, and we are reorganizing our whole customer outreach, sales, and marketing groups to actually devise, start working on solutions for commercial business, for mailers, for communities, and so on and so forth. So, we need to start thinking like that as we are fixing, as we're mending this broken thing. And we are going to have some good ideas from that.

Now there are a lot of changes I would love to make, and if I owned the place, I would make tomorrow, OK? But I do not own the place and—

Ms. CROCKETT. I am out of time, but if you can just give me one because that is why we are having these hearings. Because if I have an opportunity to produce legislation, that is what I want to do.

Mr. DEJOY. Well, yes. So, I would move faster is the first thing on everything that we are doing. I mean, the plan is baked. It is cooked. But we have a very, very large stakeholder group that has very—there is a lot of lot of interest in many things and have witnessed over 15 years what not moving—the consequence of not moving forward. So—

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The distinguished gentleman from Arizona, the gentleman, my friend Mr. Biggs, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks for being here today, Mr. Postmaster DeJoy. I appreciate the updates you have given us.

In 2018, the Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act, or STOP Act, was signed into law. That law was intended to prevent the shipment of fentanyl and synthetic drugs into the U.S. through the mail by requiring advanced electronic data to be included on all inbound international packages shipped through the

U.S. Postal Service. Private carriers have been required to carry this electronic tracking information as well since 2022.

However, last year, some of our Senate colleagues wrote to your office and the CBP to express concerns about the issuance of an excessive number of waivers issued to countries beyond the scope intended by the law. And the GAO report from May of last year, indicates that from Fiscal Year 2016 to 2021, mail and automobiles were the two top conveyance types used for drugs that were seized. In fact, the data in the report suggest that CBP components made more than 225,000 drug seizures concealed in mail parcels over this time period, and I would like to submit that report for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. Without objection, it will be entered in the record.

Mr. BIGGS. And so, I am wondering if you can provide this Committee with an update on the implementation of the STOP Act?

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you, sir. And I do not know if you noticed, but I had many, many interactions with Senator Portman, who was a strong advocate of the STOP Act, and we actually was very much involved in the AED measurements, the AED sampling. That is the electronic advanced notice—

Mr. BIGGS. So, Postmaster DeJoy, we just have a short period of time. I have other questions. So, can you be real specific about the implementation?

Mr. DEJOY. The implementation—from the Postal Service standpoint, we implement what the State Department and CBP tell us to do, and we have specific operating requirements. Right now, it is about 85—I think it is 85 percent compliance with AED. But we brought on just last year, I think, recently—I do not know if it was last year—27 new countries.

And every time we bring on new countries, we—they are allowed a fragment, a steppingstone compliance methodology, and that brings the overall average down. Many of—

Mr. BIGGS. So, what is the number of waivers to countries at this point?

Mr. DEJOY. I mean, according to the law, there is a lot. I think almost everybody would be on a waiver right now, you know? So—

Mr. BIGGS. Be still my heart.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BIGGS. So, what is the total amount of drugs concealed through mail parcels last Fiscal Year that you interdicted, that were interdicted?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, I had—I just had—but we track it. Fentanyl is probably up 30 percent from—and I'm talking about overall—

Mr. BIGGS. Can you get us specific numbers?

Mr. DEJOY. I can get you that. I have a whole list, you know, marijuana, fentanyl, everything.

Mr. BIGGS. Do you know if there is any—well, I mean, I do not know this. But you said basically every country has a waiver. And so, the question I was going to ask you is any inbound mail coming from countries who have a waiver of STOP Act AED requirements, sounds like all of them have some kind of waiver. Is that what you said?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, if you read the STOP Act, we are supposed to have 100 percent compliance.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. DEJOY. You know, there's not 100 percent compliance. So, we have different statistical sampling methods and so forth.

Mr. BIGGS. All right. Can you—so I'm hoping that maybe you can get me some specific data?

Mr. DEJOY. I'll give you very detailed information on it.

Mr. BIGGS. All right. And then I, along with everyone else, will tell you that I have got a couple of local issues, specific. So maybe someone on your team can get together with me?

Mr. DEJOY. Absolutely.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Thanks for being here, Postmaster. And I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The Member, Ms. Lee, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Delivering for America plan, particularly the part about the consolidation of sorting and delivery centers, is intended to improve postal performance and finances. These changes will most certainly have major effects on all our local communities, and postal workers have raised concerns about those impacts. But are those concerns being heard by leadership?

Section 301 of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act requires the Postal Service to engage and share data with these communities and stakeholders prior to implementing a realignment or consolidation plan. Mr. DeJoy, how did the Postal Service comply with this community engagement requirement prior to the release of the DFA, particularly about the restructuring of the facilities?

Mr. DEJOY. We made the determination that we complied with every aspect of the law and regulations with regard to the plan, as we roll it out. The plan is ideas, and as we move forward, we communicate. We have had—I cannot tell you the amount of communications that we have had with the Congress, with other stakeholders. So far, we feel very comfortable in terms of what we did.

Ms. LEE. In fact, the Postal Regulatory Commission recently opened a formal public inquiry into the Delivering for America plan to get more transparency and learn more about the impacts on the postal community. Yet the Postal Service recently filed an objection to this inquiry and requested it be withdrawn.

Mr. DeJoy, why is the Postal Service objecting to this inquiry meant to make sure you actually engage with your stakeholders and customers?

Mr. DEJOY. We engage with our stakeholders. We feel it is our position that the Postal Regulatory Commission has overstepped their authority, and we are an independent organization, and we have—we are charged with the mission of saving the organization, not the Postal Regulatory Commission. The Postal Regulatory Commission sat over and watched the destruction of the organization over the last 15 years and actively participated in the destruction of the organization over the last 15 years.

What we are trying to do is save the organization. I—what goes on, why they do the things they do, I am yet to figure out, and I'm a pretty smart guy.

Ms. LEE. Thank you for that.

If your objection is dismissed, will you commit to participating in stakeholder forums and pledge not to take any further steps to block or delay such a forum?

Mr. DEJOY. I did not hear the full question, but I am—we have communicated extensively and will communicate extensively to all stakeholders with regard to the reasonable amount of description one can give in taking on and doing a massive change that is done. At the end of the day, we are not affecting service. We are not going to affect service. Service will continue. Service is better now.

And it is because of the things that we have done within the plan. We will reach all 165 million addresses we are supposed to do. We will meet the service requirements, and so forth. We just have to fix the chaos that exists within it that was established over the last 15 years.

Ms. LEE. You have touted that the DFA has already reduced projected losses for the decade by more than half. Yet the Postal Service has already lost \$2.1 billion in 2023. That is 75 percent more than expected by this point. How do you explain this complete contradiction in numbers?

Mr. DEJOY. So, a couple of ways. No. 1, in our plan, there is \$3 billion in this year's budget, full year \$3 billion of CSRS reform that was planned that we have not—it is an administrative order that we are advocating to get. That has not happened.

We had almost \$2 billion in inflation, which was not expected, in excess of our projected inflation. The way we—we bill in the future, we incur the cost currently. And then there were additional costs that I kept in place so as we transitioned, we did not impact service. And that was—that is going to be about another \$1.5 billion.

So, we are not giving up on the long term. It was a big task. The place a little more broke than we figured out in the first five months of being here. But we are very, very committed to getting this back on track and moving forward.

And that is why interference from the Postal Regulatory Commission is not helpful. It is going to put this whole plan in jeopardy.

Ms. LEE. Thank you for your comments.

I wanted to talk about electrifying, the effort to electrify the fleet. But with time in mind, I will close and say this. The Postal Service delivers for the Nation every day. To be effective at this essential mission, it needs to get feedback from its customers and stakeholders at every possible juncture.

Cutting corners to save time or money often has long-term harmful effects like erosion of trust and loss of customers. It is baffling to me that such a cornerstone of our society has become so politicized and controversial. The Postal Service needs to improve transparency and do better for the American people.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The gentlewoman from Colorado, Mrs. Boebert, is recognized for five minutes.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Postmaster General DeJoy, you testified that 98 percent of the Nation's population is receiving their mail and packages in three days or less. What percentage of mail is delivered on time in rural areas in America?

Mr. DEJOY. I would say our overall standard of first-class mail is—to the service standards is about 92, 93 percent right now. Marketing mail is 95 percent.

Mrs. BOEBERT. OK. Those are pretty high numbers. So, I asked that because I have heard from my constituents over the past few years in rural America who are receiving terrible service from the Postal Service. I know a lot of issues have been brought up today, and we are working to get solutions with you. So, thank you so much for being here and providing answers so we can try to work through this.

But the struggles that we are seeing are veterans and seniors not receiving important prescriptions in a timely manner. Postal positions have been unfilled for long periods of time. Local post offices have been closed or had extremely limited hours. Packages have been seen piling up in lobbies. Some people did not receive a single piece of mail for three weeks in my district. Wait times exceed an hour in some places. And to make matters worse, extremely poor customer service is something that I am hearing a lot of.

Colorado City is south of Pueblo, went out with—went without its contract post office for approximately six weeks after the contractor who ran it quit because the Postal Service was not honoring his contracts. People in my district literally had to drive 30 minutes to Pueblo to get their mail, and just, I think, you would agree that these things are unacceptable.

Now Postmaster General DeJoy, an estimated 15,000 rural pharmacies were forced out of the Department of Defense Health Agency's Cigna Express Scripts reimbursement plan, and this has caused rural veterans across Colorado's Third District to rely solely on the Postal Service to receive their prescriptions. This has caused veterans to go without these prescriptions, most of which are necessary for the quality of their life, for upwards of weeks and due to the delay in this delivery.

Now this is not only happening in our rural areas, such as Cortez, Las Animas, Del Norte, Meeker, Rangely, and just about all of these mountain communities, but it is even happening in major populated areas such as Grand Junction, Colorado, and in Pueblo, as mentioned. What steps are you taking to ensure that postal service no longer leaves our veterans going weeks without important quality of life prescriptions?

Mr. DEJOY. So, specifically in Colorado, when I was made aware of the issue—and I met with your two Senators—we put—and we are doing this in all the areas, making—as I said—

Mrs. BOEBERT. I am sorry. When did you meet with the Senators? If that is something you could recall.

Mr. DEJOY. A month ago, two months ago.

Mrs. BOEBERT. OK. OK.

Mr. DEJOY. But we—it really was from the January and beginning of February activity that was out there that—and we—I put a SWAT team out into the area, and we put 12 or 13, moved 12 or 13 carriers up. We re-established contracts, highway contracts in the area. We brought in—put additional management in, I think, eight or nine different locations around the mountain area, and we got the service flowing back on, on time.

And as I said earlier, there is a lot of damage that was done. And then coming through the pandemic, these remote retail areas are the ones that are the longest for us to get back and the toughest for us to get back into stable operating condition. And we are working on it.

I think most of those areas in Colorado are significantly better than they were before. I watch the days to deliver, missed mail to delivery points, and so forth. So, I think—have you had any recent—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Yes. So, we have had ongoing issues that have been brought to our attention, and specifically, there was a period in time in October 2021, when I reached to you personally, and I was denied a meeting. We could not get—

Mr. DEJOY. You reached to me?

Mrs. BOEBERT. Yes. Yes, I did. And this was just about the unacceptable service that we were seeing in La Veta at a post office in my district, and a government relations representative from Washington, DC, responded and said a lie, stating that staffing issues were not impacting operating hours. And they absolutely were.

So, I am glad that you reached out to the Senators and spoke to them. I am grateful to hear what you are expressing to this Committee about the commitments that you are making to address these issues, and I hope to work with you personally in the future and with your staff as well because this is something that is very important to all Americans.

So, thank you so much for your time. And I yield back.

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

The gentlewoman from California, Ms. Barragan, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Postmaster General, you are a popular guy. I asked for a call from you as well and was denied that request. But let me say thank you for being here and for answering questions.

And I want to thank you for in your testimony mentioning the men and women of the Postal Service, and you say we owe them our best efforts and a solid plan to address the problems of the past and to chart a course. Your testimony also attaches a second-year report, Delivering for America, and on page 11 of that, it says—and I am quoting—“The well-being of our 635,000 employees is at the heart of Delivering for America. We are investing in both our employees and the facilities they work in.”

I cannot agree more. I am a huge fan of the Post Office and the men and the women who provide service and who go in day in and day out to deliver mail.

Mr. DeJoy, do you ever visit post offices, yes or no?

Mr. DEJOY. Frequently.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Frequently. Have you ever visited any of the USPS international service centers?

Mr. DEJOY. I have.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Have you, by any chance, ever visited one in Carson, California?

Mr. DEJOY. No, but I'm aware of it. Actually, I did visit Carson—before it was an international center.

Ms. BARRAGAN. OK. Do you believe that employees should have to work in a facility that is below 30 degrees?

Mr. DEJOY. Nope.

Ms. BARRAGAN. And do you believe that employees should have to work in a facility that is close to 100 degrees?

Mr. DEJOY. Nope.

Ms. BARRAGAN. I have to agree with you. I do not think these are suitable working conditions, and OSHA, even though they do not have a specific number, they have a temperature range, and it is far well away from those. Let me tell you about working conditions in that facility that happens to be in my congressional district. I wrote you a letter about this, which I asked for a phone call about.

I will say your staff, somebody did respond back. Now these are working conditions that employees of the U.S. Postal Service International Service Center in Carson, California, have been faced with. From December 2022 through March 2023, the employees were working in this facility that registered temperatures as low as 28 degrees when it was cold, and the building there was intended to be a warehouse, not really a processing center. It does not have any kind of HVAC system, and the electrical capacity there is not sufficient to run enough heaters to regulate the temperatures in the building.

I, myself, went to visit it and joined the workers, the men and the women, who were out protesting against these unacceptable, unsuitable conditions. And so now that you have been made aware of this, what are you committed to try to do to fix this?

Mr. DEJOY. So, Congresswoman, we have plenty of facilities like that around the country that have conditions that need to be addressed, and we are out addressing them. That is—

Ms. BARRAGAN. Are you saying you have a lot of facilities where workers are working in unsafe conditions?

Mr. DEJOY. There are different types of conditions. There are different types of conditions that they will make workplace activities, produce the result we do not want in terms of productivity and the employee experience. And that is a big part of what the Delivering for America plan is about.

And we, in that particular facility, it was part of a process where we leased it for a short term. We are getting out of the building. We are going to close that building down and consolidate it into our Los Angeles facility.

But we have what we have, and when conditions happen, and we have people working there and mail flowing, we're not always able to respond to these types of conditions the way we would like to. That is the aggregation—

Ms. BARRAGAN. Well, Mr. DeJoy—

Mr. DEJOY. That is an accumulation of 15 years' worth of neglect that I cannot fix in two years.

Ms. BARRAGAN [continuing]. First of all, it is not really 15 years of neglect.

Mr. DEJOY. It is.

Ms. BARRAGAN. And I will tell you why. Because this was a five-year lease. So, it has not been 15 years, and when they entered the lease, they should have said, hey, there needs to be safe working conditions here. And you basically have just said, hey, there is unsafe working conditions, and that is what it is.

That should not be the response of our country to the men and the women who need to deliver and who do deliver for America. The response really should be, and I hoping your response was going to be, I am going to see how quickly we can get the workers out of these unsafe conditions because nobody should be working in degrees that is 30 degrees.

Mr. DEJOY. That is very unfair. That is, in fact, what I have been doing. That is a very unfair accusation.

Ms. BARRAGAN. You just said it is what it is.

Mr. DEJOY. I was explaining the status of the condition of the organization when I arrived here and what we have been trying to do over the last two years. And we recognize we have facility issues, and we recognize that that is a facility issue, and we are going to be moving it. But it is a big place with a lot of people and no money, right? And we are trying to fix it.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Well, I hope that you will look at it more closely to get a quicker resolution.

Thank you. With that I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

Without objection, Congressman LaTurner of Kansas is going to be waved onto the subcommittee for the purpose of questioning witnesses at today's hearing. The distinguished gentleman from Kansas is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your indulgence.

Postmaster DeJoy, thank you for being here today.

Bringing the Postal Service back into the black is a tremendous undertaking, and trust me when I tell you that every Member of this Committee wishes you all the success in your endeavors to do that. However, I do have some concerns with the operations side of the USPS and would appreciate your clarification and insight on a few things.

When we passed the Postal Service Reform Act just over a year ago, we included a requirement for the Postal Regulatory Commission, in consultation with the Inspector General, to conduct a study of the causes of inefficiencies in the processing of flats. The PRC report was recently issued, and now the ball shifts to you to develop and implement a plan to remedy the inefficiencies. What are you currently considering to address these problems?

Mr. DEJOY. So we—my engineering staff is studying the recommendations. We most likely will not agree with what it is that their study identified. There seemed to be some blatant misses in terms of what their assumptions are. But we will go through that. We are going to get a response.

And overall, we are trying to—

Mr. LATURNER. Can you specifically say what you agree with or disagree with?

Mr. DEJOY. I cannot. I cannot. But there is some basic math was—or relationships were not accurate, just like their pricing over the last 15 years.

Mr. LATURNER. Do you believe a moderation mechanism should be in place to ensure rate increases do not result in volume reduction, at least while you work on the flats processing issue?

Mr. DEJOY. I think that is not practical at all.

Mr. LATURNER. You do not think that is practical?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. No, I do not think it will fix anything, and—so, no. The answer is no. I think we need to continue—if the pricing methodology that is in place today, OK, was in place for the last 15 years, we would be \$50 billion to \$70 billion ahead.

So far, I have raised prices \$5 billion, \$6 billion, of which 80 percent of that money has been the inflationary environment that we have today. So, the discussion about price, which is what got us into this situation that we are today, is just like a nonstarter with me. I have been very, very—very, very purposeful in speaking to the mailers about what I feel the issue is and very purposeful in speaking with the board, and the board recognizes this.

And the mail volume declines have gone on for 10 years, and by us subsidizing, subsidizing industry who is—where is where most of these complaints are coming for is not going to do anything for them or do anything for the Postal Service.

Mr. LATURNER. One of the biggest problems for decades for a variety of factors, controllable or otherwise, has been that the USPS is a relatively high-cost organization. Is there anything you think should be done to reduce costs that you are currently considering that you are currently constrained from doing? Is there anything you are considering that you are constrained from doing?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, there is a lot of things I'm constrained from doing. I went to change a two-hour entry time on periodicals so I could aggregate mail moves, movement of mail, and I got stopped by the Postal Regulatory Commission. Yet, for the last 10 years, they watched the destruction of the organization and did not do a thing.

So, there is plenty of things. I could move a lot faster; I could move a lot faster in terms of—but the Delivering for America plan has identified specific things that we are trying to do with regard to our network and delivery and sales and integrating the movement of mail and packages, and price is part of it. Raising prices on market dominant mail is part of the process. We have had a defective pricing model for 15 years, and we need to move—we need to move beyond that.

Mr. LATURNER. You mentioned periodicals. Since August 2021, periodicals' rates have increased more than 32 percent, well above inflation, as other costs continue to rise—paper, ink, transportation, and the like. My constituents tell me these increases are not sustainable.

Periodical volumes have declined 32 percent since 2018. There is no other option for delivery, leaving these businesses to cut staff or close their doors. Would you agree that we must look for solutions other than raising rates?

Mr. DEJOY. And we are looking for solutions to get the organization to where it is generating a profit. But for the last 19 years, we have stapled—today, we tape a quarter to every periodical we deliver. You know what that means? We lose \$500 million delivering periodicals.

So, I do not—I mean, a lot of that is because we have had a defective pricing model for 15 years. Now we do have costs. I tell everybody I know we have inefficiencies, and that is what we are trying to drive out. And we are driving billions of dollars out of the organization, and we will continue to accelerate that cost reduction as we move forward.

Mr. LATURNER. Do you understand the very real issues that this is causing for some of these companies that are struggling with rising inflation, the rising cost of other things? Are you sensitive to the idea rather than just—because it sounds like what you are saying is stop whining. We had a bad pricing model for 15 years. There is a little more to it than that.

Mr. DEJOY. I'm not saying that. I'm facing the realities, sir. I'm facing the realities of what existed here, what was allowed to exist for 15 years and the consequence that was dealt to the organization that we are trying to fix right now. And price is part of it.

If you had a defective pricing model for 15 years, what would you propose is part of a tool in the toolbox to try and fix that? You get new authority. I have a regulator. They allow—they allow the prices that we charge based on whatever it is that they look up in that room, OK? And we are using that authority.

And most of that has to come—comes from inflation, right? And you understand the inflationary impacts that we have had over the last couple of years. So, what are we supposed to do as an organization that's losing money, trying to dig out of a hole? Suck it up and continue to subsidize the industry? That is not what I was brought here to do.

Mr. LATURNER. Just I wish you would be more mindful of the businesses that this is—

Mr. DEJOY. I am very mindful.

Mr. LATURNER [continuing]. That this is impacting.

I am over time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The distinguished gentleman from California, Mr. Garcia, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. DeJoy, thank you for being here, and I especially want to thank all the women and men of the Postal Service, the incredible folks. I know a lot of them in my community back home. And our Postal Service, of course, we know, should connect all of us. It does incredible service for so many, especially folks that are seniors that might be at home or have special needs, and the Postal Service is critical, we know, for these folks especially.

Now we know that, unfortunately, for many Americans living in poverty, especially those without stable housing, mail and the delivery of mail is very difficult. So many rely on the public benefits for survival, for timely distribution of medication, of information. So, we want to continue to improve our service whenever we can.

Many public benefits require a response within a limited time-frame. We know in California recipients of services like CalWORKS, Medi-Cal, CalFresh, only have 10 days to respond, and not receiving mail in a timely manner is sometimes the reason why a lot of folks lose SNAP or their food benefits. And so that delivery of mail is really critical.

For people who cannot afford access to a P.O. box, the general delivery service is the only way that they can access essential mail, including food benefits, health insurance, housing vouchers, and more. Now the issue of mail accessibility is especially critical, and there is two issues that I wanted to bring up to you, sir, that you would work with our office to help address.

We know that there are barriers to voting disproportionately for folks that are unhoused, that might be immigrants, or folks that may not have direct access to mail. And I have seen this firsthand in the city of Avalon. And Avalon is a city in California that is on Catalina Island, a very small community. And like other rural communities across the country, they do not have home delivery.

This community operates on a P.O. box system, which has led to Avalon residents struggling for years to access mail-in ballots and to be accurately counted on U.S. Census forms. I just wanted to flag this one issue. Mr. DeJoy, do you and your team agree to help work with us on these Avalon concerns that the council there, the community, this is their top issue with mail delivery. They are having concerns. So, I wanted to flag that for you.

It is a small island community off the coast of California. It is a beautiful community, and they have been asking me to really push on this issue. So, if I can have your commitment on that, that would be great.

Mr. DEJOY. Yes, well, my government relations people will reach out to you.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, sir.

And then the second issue, Mr. DeJoy, that I want to talk about, continue about accessibility. There is a really critical issue in the city of Maywood. Now Maywood is a small community in California. It is the most dense city west of the Mississippi. It is a largely immigrant population, many Spanish speakers. But again, if you can imagine the most dense city west of the Mississippi, this is the small community that I am discussing.

This is their number-one concern whenever I talk to the city council or meet anyone in the community, that post office, as you can see behind me—we will get you a photo—what is missing is an ADA-compliant ramp to allow wheelchair access. And so, what has been shown to me on multiple occasions is seniors and folks in wheelchairs, they cannot access the post office.

And now the building has stood for nearly a century, it has remained ADA-noncompliant since the bill was passed into law. It has been 25 years, and despite continued outreach from the city of Maywood to USPS. Now we understand, in conversations with your staff—and I do appreciate their work, by the way—in conversations with your staff, they said, well, there are other post offices that are near me—none, of course, in the city—that they could use that have a ramp. That is not an acceptable answer for the folks in this community. These are seniors. These are folks in wheelchairs.

These are folks that have a hard time moving, and they cannot get up these steps.

They, physically, even seniors cannot physically, many of them, get up these steps. And this is also a community that is underserved. And so, I just wanted you to know that within the city of Maywood, this is their number-one request of me as their Federal representative is can you please get us an ADA ramp for the post office.

So, I just wanted you to know that. And if, Mr. DeJoy, I can have just a commitment? Your team, essentially, the impression we have received has been we cannot help, and we are compliant within the law. I do not find that to be an acceptable answer.

Mr. DeJoy?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes. So, I will—we will take a look at it. I mean, it was a good pitch. So, we'll take a look.

Mr. GARCIA. I figured since you would be here, I would give you this pitch for these folks. And I will tell you that they will be very excited if you are able to help them.

Last, just real briefly, I know that we have a longstanding commitment with our veterans. The Post Office has traditionally had a great relationship with veterans. I know that we have seen a reduction of veterans within Postal Service work. Did you want to maybe note why that is, and then what is our longstanding commitment to veterans in this country as it relates to USPS?

Mr. DEJOY. So, I mean, historically, I mean, veterans have been a significant part of our work force. The—and it still is a significant part of our work force. I believe we have over 70,000 veterans in the work force.

This type of—the economy is changing. Society is changing. The number of veterans is changing, and the type of work is different. We are trying to find ways to increase the attraction to being a postal worker, and it starts with making the improvements in the workplace that we are heading down and being more vibrant in terms of our commercial application, growing in the business, and being more creative in terms of our services.

And I think, you know, people want to be associated with a winner and so on, and we have had a lot of hard time over the last 15 years. So, it has not been, you know, a pleasant place to work, and we are trying to change that.

And I think, I know we have already had a consequence, a positive consequence on it. There is still so much more to do. We will continue to do it, and hopefully, we will attract all sorts of different people.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, sir. I know I am out of time. So, I yield back, and I appreciate your answers and your commitment just to help. Thanks.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentleman yields back his time.

The gentlewoman from South Carolina, Ms. Mace, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. DeJoy, thank you for being here with us this afternoon and answering our questions very directly, even some of them that have been very tough.

I represent South Carolina's First congressional District. We are the 10th fastest-growing district in the Nation. We have seen explosive growth over the last couple of years, and in fact, when tourists come to Charleston or Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, they never want to leave. And so, they buy houses and they stay there, which is great for our economy, but also presents certain challenges in regards to postal service and deliveries.

So, I have a few questions that I would like to ask on behalf of my constituents. We receive complaints about mail delivery almost on the daily from constituents, and we sort of feel helpless at this point on being able to get them their packages and everything. So, my questions are really just specific to our demands in our district.

Despite the significant population growth in the First congressional District, there has been a lack of new post offices or additional postal routes being established to accommodate our growth. And so, I would like to ask you today should the Postal Service adapt to changing demographic circumstances, yes or no?

Mr. DEJOY. Yes.

Ms. MACE. OK. Thank you.

A postal worker from the Low Country—that is our nickname for the area that I represent—called our office recently to say they are not able to keep new hires onboard because their routes are impossible to complete in the allotted time. And even if they do complete them, it is often long after dark, which has become a safety issue and a safety concern and can result in increased postal crime and violence, which you know is on the rise.

So, I would like to ask you if you think it is appropriate for postal workers to have to work or take on those kinds of risks, yes or no?

Mr. DEJOY. No.

Ms. MACE. Thank you.

My constituents' medications, we have heard stories from constituents of their medications crystalizing in the mail, becoming useless due to being left in warehouses, trucks, or in the wrong mailbox. Is it standard Postal Service policy for the elderly not to get their medicine on time, and when they finally do get it, for it to have gone bad, yes or no?

Mr. DEJOY. No.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. Many of my constituents have called in complaining of incurring late fees on bills due to late mail, missing IRS refunds, missing sent payments. Is there any reimbursement or plan for action for our constituents who now have late fees on bills, bills that were missed because mail was delivered late or was lost?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, there is no action for reimbursement, but we are trying to improve mail service across the Nation.

Ms. MACE. And what about for those who have to repurchase medication due to it being delivered late, is there—not being able to be delivered on time?

Mr. DEJOY. There is no action to reimburse anyone.

Ms. MACE. OK. In the last year, we sent a letter to a district manager to start a process to fix zip code lines in Goose Creek, South Carolina, my hometown, to create a new zip code for Cane Bay in our district. My constituents have wanted this for years.

And Mayor Habib of Goose Creek asks me about it every time I see him, and to date, nothing has happened on the U.S. Postal Service side of things.

So, I would like to know if you guys can get around to helping us so we can get mail delivered better, faster, more, particularly in this area on that front, or is it going to take an act of Congress? What have we got to do to fix it?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, I mean, zip codes are part of our operational process and strategy, and we just cannot add them whenever we want without looking at that. But we will take a look—we always review requests.

Ms. MACE. And what is the criteria for getting—getting that done? What criteria do you all use in the Postal Service for determining new zip codes?

Mr. DEJOY. I think we actually stopped issuing new zip codes a long time ago. So, I do not think there is a process.

Ms. MACE. So, what do we do? I mean, this is a whole area. This is one of the most fastest-growing parts of our district. I mean, it is just explosive. We cannot keep them from stop building houses and mailboxes. So, what do we—what do we do?

Mr. DEJOY. Well, so we—I will take a look at it. I mean, there's a lot of ways to solve for explosive areas than changing a zip code. There is route adjustments. There is facilities, as you request. I mean, we have—we are now looking at, part of our transition is to look at all our routes.

We are going through a whole process of reevaluating all our route structures, looking at where all our delivery units are based, rolling out new facilities, accelerating the mail moving through the system, and trying to make—stabilize the work force and make everything and everybody happy. We are on that path.

Ms. MACE. Yes. All right.

Mr. DEJOY. So, I'll look at your area. I'll look at the Charleston area, and we will get—we will talk to you about it.

Ms. MACE. Cane Bay. Just remember Cane Bay. That will be great.

I want to thank you, Mr. DeJoy, for being with us today. It is our responsibility to hold the Postal Service accountable and ensure it fulfills its mission with the utmost efficiency, integrity, and care. Cane Bay.

Thank you.

Mr. DEJOY. Thank you.

Ms. MACE. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SESSIONS. The gentlewoman yields back her time.

We are almost there.

Mr. DEJOY. OK.

Mr. SESSIONS. The distinguished gentleman, the Ranking Member, would be recognized for any closing statement the gentleman would choose to make.

Mr. MFUME. Yes, I have got a couple of quick statements, Mr. Chair.

First, Representative Connolly, who we all referenced at the beginning of this meeting, is not here now. He is still dealing with the matter of the staff persons in his office that were attacked, but he did have three questions for you, Mr. DeJoy. And for the sake

of time, I am not going to read them, but I would ask unanimous consent that they be entered into the record.

Mr. SESSIONS. Without objection, they will be entered into the record.

Mr. MFUME. And staff will make sure your staff gets a copy so that he might be able to get a response.

The other thing is that I referenced, also, earlier at the beginning of our meeting, the letter that Mr. Connolly, myself, and the Ranking Member, Mr. Raskin, wrote that you obviously just got. And as you go through it, I want to call your attention to something that jumped out at me, and it goes back to something that Representative Raskin asked.

There are—this letter deals primarily with safety of employees and trying to keep letter carriers and deliverers and everybody else safe from the crazies that are part of our society, and we reference the increases in the amount of theft, both of mail and these keys that allow persons to have access to cluster boxes and blue boxes and other things.

But what just caught my attention earlier, is that the letter references a statement made by Frank Albergo, who is the national president of the Police Officers Association of the U.S. Postal Service. He did this before the Subcommittee on September 7 of last year. And while there are certain assertions, his conclusion, though, I found striking.

He said the Postal Service must effectively utilize all of its resources to curb the plague of mail theft and to stop attacks on postal workers, and what I do know “is that Mr. DeJoy has not done anything to rectify the problem.”

Now this caught my attention after I re-read it because Mr. Raskin also asked the question about this association of police that you have oversight over. I think it is 600 or so. Then I heard you respond that you did not have statutory authority given by this Congress to direct and regulate those individuals.

So, I do not—I am a little concerned because it found its way into our letter to you, and I do not know the gentleman that made this statement who is the head of that association. But if you do not have statutory authority to do what he says you are not doing, it seems to me that this statement ought to be dis—not disallowed, but not taken seriously within this letter. Because we are trying to get real answers. We are not just trying to throw blame and to throw people under the bus.

So, if you would—thank you—if you would not pay attention to that one statement that is in this letter because it has nothing to do, in my opinion, with what we are trying to do. And now that I know that you do not have statutory authority to do what he is saying you did not do, it really does not make much sense.

So, I want to correct the record on that, and we will, obviously, look forward to your response to the several things that we ask you about that you do have authority over.

I want to thank you for being here. As I said when we began, this all started, we were all wearing masks. And there have been several persons on this Committee who talked about how they shouted at you, cursed at you, and almost threw things at you, but

you are still here, we are still here, and we think that some sense of progress is being made.

I think it would be fair to say that it is a tough, tough job with very little sympathy and a lot of regionalism because we are on the ground, and we hear what we hear from constituents. And so, we are obligated to, when we have an opportunity like this, to bring it before you.

But you should know, as the Chairman said earlier, we are looking to work together to solve problems. And what you inherited was a mess, and there were several organizations in place that are part of the U.S. Postal Service that were witnesses. They just stood around and did not do anything. We are trying to do something. We want to be supportive. We will be critical when we have to be critical, but the bottom line is that we have got to keep making some sense of progress.

So, I am going to yield back. I may have some additional questions later. If I do, I will transmit those in writing, particularly as relates to electric vehicles and what we do and how you reconfigure the assets that you have on the ground.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Mfume, thank you very much.

The Postmaster General, I think, was what I would describe as professional. I believe that the interaction of this Subcommittee and our guests were well reasoned and balanced. We will work together on this side, Mr. Postmaster General, Mr. Mfume and I. We recognize, and I think you have never thought otherwise, that there is extreme interest in what you do. But we need to work, as I have said and as you have heard today, together. I think we need to do a better job on this side, and I know we will work well with you.

I want to acknowledge the gentleman, one of our former colleagues, Mr. Sodrel from Indiana, former Congressman who has taken time to be here. Mr. Sodrel, like all of our witnesses and other guests that we have here, their attention to the details of what we are attempting to do to move this country forward, including the Postal Service, is greatly recognized and appreciated.

I want to thank the distinguished gentleman for his time. Mr. Mfume and I, as soon as I bang down the gavel, want to come down and shake your hand and offer our thanks for your service to this great Nation.

This now completes the Subcommittee hearing with the Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce with today's hearing.

[Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

