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ALREADY DELIVERING

(By Marvin Runyon)

Were the Postal Service a private company, it would be the ninth-largest business in the United States. It is bigger than Coca-Cola, Xerox and Eastman Kodak—combined. With more than 750,000 employees in all U.S. states and territories, the U.S. Postal Service is the largest civilian employer in the country—accounting for one out of every 170 U.S. paychecks. Last year, the Postal Service delivered 181 billion pieces of mail—more pieces in a day than Federal Express delivers in a year.

No doubt the complex and amazing U.S. Postal Service faces some serious challenges. But does anyone seriously believe that this calls for creating another government commission?

In their article of May 20 ["Delivery for the Postal Service," op-ed] four friends of the Postal Service—David Ginsburg, Murray Comarow, Robert L. Hardesty and David F. Harris—argue for just such a panel.

The fact is, the Postal Service can't wait for a commission. We've already begun to turn things around.

No tax dollars fill our coffers. And the real price of a stamp, when adjusted for inflation, is about the same today as it was in 1971. But today's Postal Service makes a profit. Last year, we earned \$1.8 billion. So far, we're on track to earn between \$700 million and \$900 million in fiscal 1996.

In 1995 we set a record of 88 percent for on-time delivery. We expect to set a new record when new statistics are released next week. Moreover, we intend to raise our national on-time delivery average for local first-class mail to 92 percent by next year. By 2000, we are aiming for 95 percent or better, with similar improvements in other service categories.

We're also working to raise revenue and exploring the universe of technology. In the coming months, we will be launching hybrid mail services that combine the speed of computer messaging with the security and impact of the U.S. Mail. We'll also be introducing electronic money transfer services, international catalogue shopping, convenient new bill-paying methods and dozens of new services available at our 40,000 post offices.

And we're increasing service, not costs, by reengineering the way we deliver the mail. Last year, we launched a new blueprint for excellence called CustomerPerfect!, which is helping us examine how we deliver the mail every step along the way, from the back dock to the customer's mailbox. At the same time, we're working to reduce labor costs, which account for some 80 percent of our annual budget.

But more must be done. Legislative reform is needed to allow the Postal Service to keep pace with the communications business; for example, to offer business customers volume discounts and customized service contracts. We need the authority to test new products more easily and bring them to market more quickly. And we need changes that will bring labor negotiations back to the bargaining table so we can better control our costs.

The Postal Service doesn't need a commission. It needs to have the shackles of government regulation loosened so it can continue its commitment to excellence.

INS TO BE COMMENDED IN MIAMI

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, the Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], created by Congress over a hundred years ago—March 3, 1891—has been charged with the responsibility of providing services under the Immigration and Nationality Act, which among other things includes providing assistance to individuals seeking naturalization—the process by which eligible immigrants become U.S. citizens. Therefore, INS is appropriately involved in the citizenship process as an integral part and I believe that Commissioner Meissner has made significant progress in reducing the extensive processing backlogs for prospective new citizens as interest in naturalization has increased substantially during her term as commissioner.

Although I cannot speak for other portions of the country, in Miami INS has done a commendable job of moving applicants through the citizenship process expeditiously. As a part critic of INS's failure to process applications on a timely basis, I have been encouraged by the important headway INS has made in reducing the average time for completing an application.

Naturalization applications have severely outpaced the capacity of INS—from just over 200,000 in 1983 to over a million in 1995, and thousands of applications had been accumulating in Miami with a mere 22 personnel to process them. To respond to this unacceptable situation, using its own fee revenue, INS has added 158 naturalization personnel to the Miami District staff this year to handle the steadily increasing volume of citizenship applications. In the first half of this year, thanks to the additional staffing provided by Commissioner Meissner, the Miami district has been able to complete close to 30,000 N-400 applications—the standard naturalization form—which is over 1,000 more than the Miami district completed in the entire year for 1995. I have been pleased with this progress and commend Commissioner Meissner's hard work to ensure that naturalization is given the priority it merits.

Through its Citizenship USA project, INS is meeting on a monthly basis in Miami with local organizations to improve community outreach. Groups such as One Nation, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. [CLINIC], Dade County Schools and the Hispanic Coalition have worked with volunteers and local officials to help the INS facilitate its citizenship activities.

To be eligible for citizenship, an immigrant must be a legal permanent resident for at least 5 years—three if married to a U.S. citizen—exhibit good moral character and understanding of constitutional principles, demonstrate a knowledge of U.S. history/civics and basis English—unless exempted for age or disability—and must pay an application fee of \$95 which funds the INS process of examining each case. Thus, naturalization is not an automatic step for every immigrant, and those individuals who have gone to the trouble and effort of playing by the rules and have demonstrated their dedication and desire to be a U.S. citizen deserve the opportunity to be

processed on a timely, efficient basis by INS. Although there have been enormous backlogs in the past, I believe that Commissioner Meissner is taking important steps toward helping immigrants naturalize and take full advantage of citizenship in these great United States.

CITRUS TRISTEZA VIRUS

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, northern California, with its benign temperature, is home to many agricultural products, including grapes, stone fruits, vegetables, and citrus. California has 275,000 acres in citrus groves. Roughly 30,000 to 35,000 people are employed in the citrus industry, which means on-tree revenues of \$546.3 million for the State of California. However, if the brown citrus aphid intrudes into our groves, everything we worked so hard for will be lost.

The brown citrus aphid is the carrier for the citrus tristeza virus or CTV. CTV is a very destructive disease that has already killed over 40 million trees worldwide and is projected to destroy 180 million citrus trees on citrus tristeza virus-sensitive sour orange rootstock in the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and other parts of North America. If there is even one strain of the CTV in the rootstock, it will debilitate the trees and will produce extremely low quantities of fruit. If the quantity of citrus decreases, it means millions of dollars in revenue lost for the State of California.

My colleagues in Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas share California's understanding of the importance of the threat presented by the brown citrus aphid. If not controlled, the disease will escalate and will affect the U.S. citrus industry, possibly eliminating the United States as a major supplier of fresh fruit and juice concentrate in the world.

Congress has already made a commitment to fight the citrus tristeza virus in the fiscal year 1996 and fiscal year 1997 Agricultural appropriations bills with a \$500,000 special research grant. However, I believe more needs to be done. The farm bill, passed earlier this year, created a \$3 million cooperative national research initiative to control the citrus tristeza virus and the brown citrus aphid. The program would entail new research and develop technologies needed to manage the disease, provide environmentally and energy-efficient control measures, and reduce the economic losses due to the diseases caused by the CTV. Unfortunately it was not possible to fund the research initiative in this year's appropriations bill. However, if additional monies become available to the committee, I will work to ensure that the CTV research initiative is given strong consideration for funding.

AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND HER
WORK IN BURMA

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, today there was a ceremony commemorating the

51st birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi, the rightful leader of Burma. It highlighted the continuing repression occurring in Burma. As you know, Burma is ruled by a brutal military dictatorship which rejects the mandate of the democratic elections of 1990.

Although Aung San Suu Kyi is no longer under house arrest, the military regime has been stepping up its repressive measures against her and her party, the National League for Democracy. As the sixth anniversary of the democratic election approached, over 200 people were arrested. Recently, the regime released half of the detainees. These arrests were the latest example of the egregious human rights situation in Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the National League for Democracy did not give in to the fear of retribution. They held rallies these past two weekends and will continue to meet.

I say to Aung San Suu Kyi, thank you for your courage and devotion to principle, you inspire all of us. You are a very courageous woman, who has endured uncomprehensible hardships. We will continue to help restore you and the rightfully elected parliament to power in Burma and end the horrendous human rights violations.

SALUTE TO THE MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF NINTH AND O BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. MIKE WARD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the Ninth and O Baptist Church of Louisville, KY. This remarkable congregation led by Pastor Rodney Burnette organized relief efforts for the children of a war-torn Bosnia.

Last October, the parishioners of the Ninth and O Baptist Church organized an amazing conglomeration of "shoebox blessings" filled with a variety of gifts for children in Bosnia. They worked in collaboration with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrator in Eastern Europe Bill Steele to iron out the specifics of the project. They then appealed to other churches, schools, and community organizations to donate boxes filled with toys, clothes, picture books, and candy for children of ages up to 13 years old.

More than 2,700 boxes were collected as well as over 200 cases of medical supplies and 150 cases of food. Thanks to this extraordinary church group, thousands of Bosnian children had gifts for Christmas. I would like to take this opportunity to commend them for their efforts and their commitment to building bridges of peaceful offerings to the unfortunate victims of war across the Atlantic.

TRIBUTE TO DARLENE CAROL CALVERT

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great community leader who passed away last week—Darlene Carol Calvert.

Ms. Calvert dedicated her life to community service. She was active in the Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego and in its Women's Federation and Project Freedom of Religion. She was coordinator of the Religious Rights Task Force and advisor for Planned Parenthood at her church. She served as founder and chairwoman of the San Diego chapter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and as a member of the board of directors of the Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

As a woman who had been stricken with polio at the age of 15, she committed herself to ensuring that others in similar situations could enjoy a rewarding and independent life. She was an appointee to the County Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and she lobbied for access to facilities and services for disabled persons.

With a power wheelchair, arm braces and a ventilator to provide oxygen, she lived as independently in San Diego as her health would permit—and she worked at The Access Center, a nonprofit agency that provides services for the disabled, representing her clients in their efforts to also live independently.

Despite being told often that she would never finish college or be employed, she received a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's degree in counseling from San Diego State University. She was employed in social work and chemical dependency counseling, first at Episcopal Community Services and then at the California Youth Authority. She joined The Access Center in 1993 and coordinated a program to buy adaptive equipment for people with severe disabilities.

She was honored with several awards, including the Gallantry Award by the Easter Seal Society, the Unsung Unitarian of the Year Award, the Woman of the Year Award by the Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and the Freedom of Religion Award by the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

But of all the awards, the most significant was the respect and admiration of her friends, family, and community for her community involvement, her passionate advocacy for the disabled, and her desire to make the world a better place for all people with disabilities.

We seldom find a person as dedicated and brave as Ms. Calvert—those who touch us with their perseverance and optimism. My thoughts and prayers go out to her partner, Chris Shelly, to her family, and to her friends in the disabled community and in the San Diego community at large. She will be missed.

THE PART-TIME AND TEMPORARY WORKERS PROTECTION ACT

HON. PATRICIA SCHROEDER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 1996

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, we live in a disposable society. We have disposable diapers, cups, plates, utensils, gloves, needles, razors, bags, heat packs, and flashlights. We even have disposable cameras and contact lenses. But we have gone too far. We have entered the age of the disposable worker.

I am talking about the contingent work force, which is made up of part-time workers, temporary employees, independent contractors, day laborers, and others. Let me make it

clear. I am not talking about teenagers flipping burgers. Contingent workers can be heads of a households. They can be old or young. But, not surprisingly, they are disproportionately women and minorities.

Employers increasingly view contingent workers as disposable. Contingent workers often provide short-term profits to employers who don't want to pay health insurance, pension benefits, unemployment insurance, and vacation and sick leave. This is not to say that there should be no part-time or temporary jobs. They provide flexibility for both employees and employers. Moreover, there are consciences employers and temporary agencies that set the standard when it comes to pay and benefits for part-time and temporary workers. But the rise in the number of involuntary contingent workers and the recent corporate purging that has taken place paint a gloomy portrait of contingent work in America.

Temporary employment alone grew 10 times faster than overall employment between 1982 and 1990. In 1982 contingent workers constituted a quarter of the labor force. And that number continues to rise.

Not surprisingly, women and minorities are overrepresented in the part-time and temporary work force. For example, the percentage of African-Americans in the temporary work force is double that of the whole work force. Moreover, two out of three temporary workers are women. Women and minority groups, therefore, suffer a disproportionate share of the drawbacks of involuntary part-time and temporary employment—lower per-hour wages than full-time workers; reduced or no employment-based health, retirement, and other benefits; and the constant threat of being released with little or no warning.

Employees who worked for Honeywell Information Systems found out the hard way. After working for Honeywell as a computer programmer for 8 years, Jimmie Ruth and the majority of her department were laid off. She was hired back as a consultant, but the change in status resulted in a loss of benefits and forced her to pay Social Security taxes. She found herself working along side her former coworkers, who had also been hired back without their benefits.

Corporations that replace full-time workers with temporary workers do it to save money. But it can often cost taxpayers money. We all pay higher health costs when uninsured workers receive expensive emergency care rather than preventative medicine. We all pay when employees without retirement plans must depend on public assistance. We all pay when families are unable to reinvest money back into the economy.

There is little proof that replacing core workers with contingent labor benefits companies. According to management research consultant Helen Axel, companies do not always save money by providing contingent employees with lower wages and fewer benefits. The productivity of companies is often negatively impacted by the high turnover rates of contingent employees. The costs and time required for training new waves of temporary employees are not compensated for by trimming wages and benefits.

Cutting jobs has become profitable in another way—fattening the pockets of CEO's. When Robert Allen, CEO of AT&T, announced 40,000 layoffs in January, he made more than \$5 million as AT&T stock soared. This is in