

Testimony of

**Mark Dimondstein
President
American Postal Workers Union**

**Before the
Committee on House Administration
Subcommittee on Elections**

**“The Impact of Covid-19 On Voting Rights and Election Administration:
Ensuring Safe and Fair Elections”**

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1:00

Good afternoon Chairwoman Fudge, Ranking Member Davis and members of the committee. My name is Mark Dimondstein, and I am the President of the American Postal Workers Union. Our union represents 200,000 postal workers who work to serve every community in the country each and every day, including as frontline essential workers during these most challenging and dangerous times of the pandemic. On behalf of the postal workers we represent, I thank you for the opportunity to share with you the impact COVID-19 has had on the Postal Service, its workers, and its ability to safeguard the democratic process through vote by mail and access to the ballot box.

The dire financial straits of the Postal Service as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is a national emergency. As Postmaster General Megan Brennan informed the House Oversight committee, the USPS is anticipating “a \$13 billion revenue loss directly to COVID-19 this fiscal year and a \$54.3 billion additional losses over ten years.”

Indeed, a recent USPS filing indicated that total mail volume was down 27% in the month of April, with certain types of mail declining by as much as 45 percent. While package volumes have temporarily increased with the shelter-in-place orders and made up for some of the lost revenue, such an increase will not be sustained as economies “reopen” and as the unemployment crisis weakens consumer demand. It is perhaps of little surprise that Megan Brennan has stated that the Postal Service will “run out of cash this fiscal year” without help from Congress and the Administration. These projected losses COVID-related losses are the basis for the unanimous and bipartisan request of the Postal Board of Governors for robust Congressional appropriate relief.

The demise of the Postal Service would have an extraordinary detrimental impact on the ability of citizens to safely exercise their democratic duty to cast a ballot. As such, I would emphasize that the first tenant of any vote-by-mail proposal must be to stabilize the finances of the Postal Service via an emergency appropriation of at least \$25 billion, and by ensuring USPS has unconditional access to the \$10 billion line of credit provided in the CARES Act.

Vote by mail is critical to ensure the health and safety of every citizen

During the course of this pandemic, we have seen the many ways the Postal Service is an important component of national infrastructure. The postal network has been a vital lifeline to millions of Americans confined to their homes, delivering millions of prescription drugs, medical supplies, public health information and other essential goods.

Election mail is another critical component of the Postal Service’s role in the civic life of the country and we’ve seen significant increase in the number of requests for absentee ballots. With infections still rising in many states and uncertainty of future flare ups, national vote by mail is on the order of the day. We know that vote by mail is a tried and tested system. Our members are

proud of the work we do and we take seriously the oath of office we swear and our commitment to preserve the sanctity of the mail. Postal workers are committed to ensure every American can safely access their democratic right to vote this November.

Below are a number of points for the committee's consideration:

- While data is still coming out, the recent in-person election in Wisconsin has been linked to dozens of known COVID-19 positive cases. In this same election, a significant number of polling locations were shut down due to lack of poll workers and the National Guard was called in to assist.
- The Postal Service is uniquely positioned to process and deliver millions of ballots to eligible voters across the country. It is the most-trusted federal agency in the country. Postal workers are bound to protect the privacy and sanctity of mail. It enjoys a 91% bipartisan favorability rating from the people and was the chosen agency to deliver CDC information and stimulus checks during this pandemic. Its current infrastructure is unparalleled.
- Vote by mail does not benefit one party over the other. An April 2020 study published by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research found that vote-by-mail does not appear to affect either party's share of turnout nor increases either party's vote share.
- Likewise, when Vote by mail was rolled out in Colorado, every category of turnout improved, and [no political party appeared to benefit](#).
- There are six states with full vote by mail, where ballots are automatically sent to each eligible voter weeks in advance of each election. Voters can either mail the ballot back or drop it at a designated drop box. The majority of remaining states have some form of absentee voting, many "no fault," allowing voters to submit an application for a ballot in advance of the election.

After decades of experience in mandatory vote by mail, or what is commonly called "vote at home" states, there is a long-proven record of an absence of any voter fraud, or increase in voter fraud due to the method of voting.

Conclusion

The mission of the public United States Postal spelled out in the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 is to "bind the nation together." Vote by mail has been successfully carried out by the

Postal Service for generations, for example with overseas military service members and families. The Postal Service has proven fully capable and up the task of working with various states in insuring the most efficient, monitored and protected methods applied to the mail voting process. What better way to help bind the people of the country together, to play the role in the civic life of the country that was envisioned by our founders when the Post Office was enshrined in the U.S. Constitution itself, then to maintain and enhance our access to our hard fought for and cherished right to vote.