

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-222, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell:

As representatives of our 17 million members and all American workers, we write to thank you for your national leadership during this ongoing crisis to protect the wages, salaries, and benefits of working people and to help families make it through these deeply challenging times. We write to ask you to extend that protection and help to the 640,000 steadfast employees of the United States Postal Service (USPS) who every day carry out their essential services on behalf of the people of this country.

Without immediate intervention, USPS may be forced to shut down this summer or fall, depriving all Americans of a trusted lifeline amid a global pandemic and cutting off a key service used by businesses, religious communities, and civic organizations. This cannot be allowed to happen. We cannot reopen our country without the Postal Service. We must stand with hundreds of thousands of frontline workers and protect their jobs, and the individuals, businesses and organizations that rely on this critical service. The mail must go through.

The work ethic and commitment of our postal workers is a part of the American identity. While millions of Americans shelter at home, USPS workers have continued their rounds at great personal risk. As of April 27, over 1,800 postal workers have either tested positive for coronavirus or are presumed infected, and more than 40 have lost their lives. Yet despite the danger, undaunted postal clerks, mail handlers, letter carriers and all those who handle our mail have served the public and delivered packages, mail, and life-saving medicine – including 4 million prescriptions per day – six days a week, without interruption, to every part of our country. They have provided us with a measure of certainty and security in a deeply uncertain time. We owe them no less.

Congress has the power to protect this essential service and 640,000 postal jobs by providing emergency relief that matches the unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic. On April 9, Postmaster General Megan Brennan testified to the “devastating effect” of coronavirus and a “sudden” and “steep” drop in mail volume, particularly first-class mail, costing tens of billions of dollars in the coming eighteen months. At the same time, the Postal Service has stepped up to deliver public health information, relief checks and a huge surge in parcels to Americans sheltering in place, helping our country contain the virus.

Some have falsely blamed low prices on the Postal Service’s already profitable parcel business for the crisis – instead of the pandemic-induced shutdown of the economy. They propose to use this crisis to raise shipping rates on tens of millions of businesses that rely on the Postal Service, or to cut back on service quality and days of delivery. We strongly oppose actions to punish the American businesses and families that rely on postal services – which includes the tens of millions of Americans and business located in dozens of rural states.

In solidarity with USPS workers and hundreds of millions of individuals, families and businesses who rely on the Postal Service, we ask Congress to support a \$25 billion emergency appropriation to offset mounting losses and help USPS weather this pandemic, a proposal also supported by the Board of Governors, as well as additional support to cover covid-related revenue shortfalls in the next fiscal year. We further ask Congress to include postal workers in any federal programs to provide sick leave and hazard pay for those risking ongoing exposure to COVID-19.

Relief at this critical moment will protect the livelihoods of our frontline workers, preserve an essential service for all U.S. households, and ensure that the Postal Service is ready to help reopen the economy by supporting millions of American businesses that rely on USPS every day, particularly in our rural communities.

At a moment when the federal government has stepped up to support struggling businesses of all shapes and sizes, and invested in critical industries, from aviation to agriculture, it is both fitting and urgently necessary to address the needs of the USPS and its workers now.

The mission of the Postal Service, written in federal law, is “to bind the Nation together” through “the correspondence of the people.” It is our collective responsibility to preserve that bond. The Postal Service is older than our nation itself and is the only federal agency enshrined in the United States Constitution. We ask for your commitment to support the Board’s request to stand by this unique and irreplaceable national service and the dedicated Americans who work every day to fulfill its mission.

In Solidarity,

Richard L. Trumka, President, AFL-CIO

Fred Rolando, President, NALC

Mark Dimondstein, President, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Paul Hogrogian, National President, Nat’l Postal Mail Handers Union

Ronnie Stutts, President, Nat’l Association of Rural Letter Carriers

Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

Robert Martinez, Jr., International President, International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

Sara Nelson, Int’l President, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA

James T Slevin, President, Utility Workers Union of America

Tom Conway, International President, United Steelworkers

Paul Shearon, President, Int’l Federation of Professional & Technical Employees

Christopher M. Shelton, President, Communications Workers of America

James P. Hoffa, General President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Mary Kay Henry, Int’l President, Service Employees International Union

F. Leo McCann, President, American Train Dispatchers Association

Lee Saunders, President, AFSCME

Bonnie Castillo, Executive Director, National Nurses United

Lonnie Stephenson, Int’l President, Int’l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Raymond M. Menard, President, American Guild of Musical Artists

Cecil Roberts, International President, UMWA

John Samuelson, International President, Transport Workers Union

Paul M. Rinaldi, President, NATCA

Marc Perrone, International President, UFCW

Daniel E. Stepano, General President, OPCMIA

Terry O’Sullivan, General President, LIUNA

Richard Lanigan, President, OPEIU

Kenneth E. Rigmaiden, General President, Int’l Union of Painters & Allied Trades

Harold J. Daggett, President, International Longshoremen's Association
Matthew Loeb, International President, IATSE
Harold A. Schaitberger, General President, Int'l Association of Fire Fighters
Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union
Anthony Shelton, President, BCTGM
Joe DePete, President, Air Line Pilots Association, International
Jerry C Boles, President, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen
D. Taylor, President, UNITE HERE
Lily Eskelsen García, President, NEA
James P. McCourt, General President, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers
Marshall Ainley, President, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
Everett B. Kelley, Nat'l President, American Federation of Government Employees
Ernest Logan, President, AFSA
Stuart Appelbaum, President, RWDSU
Gabrielle Carteris, President, SAG-AFTRA
Tefere A. Gebre, Executive Vice President, AFL-CIO
Elizabeth Shuler, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Jennifer Dorning, President, Department for Professional Employees
Jimmy Hart, President, Metal Trades Department
Richard Kline, President, Union Label & Service Trades Department
Michael Sacco, President, Maritime Trades Department
Larry Willis, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Rick Bloomingdale, President, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO State Federation
Michael Louis, President, Missouri AFL-CIO State Federation
Charles Wowkanech, President, New Jersey State AFL-CIO
Alan B. Hughes, President, Arkansas State AFL -CIO
Ben Valdepeña, President, California State Employees Association
Patrick J. Eiding, President, Philadelphia Central Labor Council
Elise Bryant, President, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Cynthia Estrada, Executive Council Member, UAW
Clayola Brown, National President, A. Philip Randolph Institute
Warren Fairley, IVP SE, EAIP, Boilermakers
Fred Redmond, Vice-President, United Steelworkers
Bruce R. Smith, GMP Council Chairman, GMP/USW
George E McCubbin III, National Vice-President, AFGE District 12
Jerame Davis, Executive Director, Pride at Work

Al Ekblad, President, AFL-CIO Western District

CC: Board of Governors

Postmaster General