STATEMENT RELATING TO THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTIONAL LAW PROJECT

August 25, 2020

The Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project highly values the services provided by the United States Postal Service, and urges it to maintain its operations, without changes to its operations, service, or delivery.

Communication between incarcerated people and their families is a valuable lifeline. People are frequently incarcerated in prisons far away from their loved ones, and mail may be their only means of contact.

Also, studies establish that regular contact between incarcerated people and their families results in better post-release outcomes and lower recidivism.

With the overrepresentation of Black and Latinx people in prisons and jails, any impact on mail service disproportionately affects communities of color.

Legal mail is critical for incarcerated people to communicate with their lawyers and have meaningful access to the legal system, and email, fax, and other electronic methods are not available to send important documents. The Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project receives approximately 15,000 requests a year, almost all by mail, and heavily relies on the United States Postal Service to communicate with our clients to provide legal advice, advocacy, and representation.

The United States Postal Service is therefore a vital and valuable tool in the criminal justice system that can lead to more positive results for our community and this nation.