



September 13, 2024

National Association of Secretaries of State
444 North Capitol St NW # 401
Washington, DC 20001
Attn: Leslie Reynolds

National Association of State Election Directors
1200 G Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
Attn: Amy Cohen

Dear National Association of Secretaries of State, National Association of State Election Directors, and other election officials:

Thank you for your letter. The Postal Service is eager to build on our success from the 2020 and 2022 elections. As always, we look forward to continued coordination and robust communication with NASS and NASED. You can rest assured that along with the entire United States Postal Service, I am personally fully committed to effective implementation of our longstanding processes and procedures designed to ensure that all ballot mail is delivered in a timely and secure manner. We will make every effort to expeditiously resolve any specific concerns brought to our attention by your organizations.

Further, to the extent that there are specific issues identified in the letter, we believe that many have already been discussed and addressed. A successful election season requires the collaboration and engagement of our stakeholders. We hope the responses in this letter continue to demonstrate our longstanding commitment to the expeditious delivery of the nation's Election Mail and assuage any concerns you may have. In that regard, I am confident in our Election and Government Mail Services group, and in the robust plans we have in place. This work will result in operational excellence by the Postal Service to deliver Election Mail for the American people this year. That said, and as more fully articulated below, I also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in the immediate future to directly discuss your concerns.

As we have communicated widely with your organizations and individual election officials, the Postal Service is in the midst of a network modernization. We have provided briefings on our modernization plans to NASS and NASED, along with individual state election officials. Let us reiterate, modernization and enhancement plans will not have an impact on Election Mail, and we have committed to limit network changes to avoid any unintended disruption in service for the upcoming election and peak season. We would also remind you that on average, we are currently delivering mail in 2.7 days, which is consistent with our recommendation that, as a common-sense measure, voters should mail their completed ballot before Election Day, and at least one week prior to their state's deadline. Furthermore, as demonstrated consistently in previous elections, Election Mail routinely outperforms our regular service performance due to our long-standing processes and procedures.

Please find specific answers to the questions outlined in your letter below:

Training and Consistency in Implementation of Postal Election Mail Policies

We have robust, ongoing internal training for all employees. We have increased the frequency of our Learn & Grow and Education Series which includes training on all of our policies and procedures. We've enhanced our All-Clear Processes, Yard Check Certifications, and transitioned to a new electronic Election and Political Mail All Clear log, which makes it easier to track compliance. The Postal Service has addressed the OIG's recommendations regarding education, communication, and training such as ensuring that Standup Talks and work instructions are posted on the work room floor in every facility.

In addition to reinforcing our internal training efforts, we have ongoing practices to ensure compliance with our policies and procedures throughout the organization. In July, we reinstated the National Election Mail Joint Taskforce with union leaders and management associations. As part of this effort, beginning on October 1, we will deploy ballot monitors and ambassadors in Processing Operations and Retail & Delivery units to reinforce and amplify our policies and procedures on the ground. The Postal Inspection Service is also conducting ongoing Election Mail Inspections in processing facilities and delivery units.

Also in July, as a part of my Election Mail initiative, I established a Performance Excellence Team. The team, which is comprised of regional election coordinators, works in conjunction with Postal Headquarters and plant staff to ensure the timely processing of Election Mail via frequent messaging and onsite reviews. This team will work tirelessly to ensure smooth processing and delivery of Election Mail and jump into action should any delays arise.

The Performance Excellence Team serves as a dedicated field resource to assist with plants in each region by addressing questions or concerns that the Plant and District Strike Team may have to ensure we provide timely delivery of all Election and Political Mail. This Integrated Operating Plan (IOP) Gemba team conducts process audits, distributes findings for plant response and action, and schedules follow up audits. Additionally, the team distributes a weekly newsletter on my behalf to Plant Managers regarding important Election Mail information.

In addition, the Postal Service Office of Inspector General is auditing our plants and delivery units. They will report to us in real time any issues that they discover, and we will address those issues expeditiously.

Delivery Times

In the 2020 general election, the Postal Service delivered 99.9 percent of ballots from voters to election officials within seven days. The on-time performance rate for the midterm elections was 99.93 percent. Even regarding the OIG audit you referenced in your letter, the OIG reported that for the period from December 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, the Postal Service processed Election and Political Mail with on time processing scores ranging from 97.01 to 98.17 percent. As mentioned above, on average, mail is currently being delivered in 2.7 days and Election Mail routinely outperforms our regular service performance.

As you know, we take any reports of delayed Election Mail seriously and work to solve problems even when it turns out that they are not the responsibility of the Postal Service. For example, and as you are aware, we identified several flawed ballot envelope designs and address quality issues that caused ballot mail to loop within our system or to be incorrectly delivered or returned to sender. In those cases, when election officials bring concerns to our attention, or when we discover the issues on our own, we are able to work with election officials to ensure their ballot envelopes and addressing conform with our best practice recommendations that we consistently share with election officials to ensure effective use of the mail.

If you have issues with delayed postmarked ballots, we encourage you to share envelopes with our team so we can investigate and determine the root cause of the problem. As we regularly discuss, identifying specific operational concerns as they arise provides us with the opportunity to address any issues irrespective of the cause. This is routinely demonstrated through our responses to concerns raised by your members through www.electionmail.org.

Mail returned as undeliverable

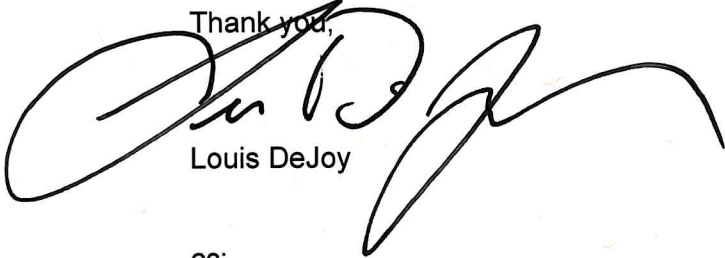
Our Performance Excellence Team has initiatives deployed to ensure that employees working our Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS), which intercepts mail that is identified as “undeliverable as addressed,” are following standard work instructions to maintain current conditions, and ensure ballots are not returned to election officials. The most common reason that a mailpiece is returned to sender is poor address quality, but we are working to ensure that whatever the cause, we resolve the issue quickly.

As to your suggestion about extending extraordinary measures, it is important to understand that we routinely monitor performance in all of our facilities, and we implement certain processes and procedures specific to Election Mail all year round, including advancing Election Mail ahead of other mail in processing and using daily “all clears” to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and that mail scheduled or “committed” to go out is processed accordingly. The extraordinary measures are designed to effectively balance the risk inherent in deviating from routine, automated processes in an operation of our size and scale and expediting ballot mail that is entered into the postal system by Election Officials and voters so close to Election Day, that the mail may not otherwise arrive by a state’s deadline. The measures are not intended to compensate for general operational deficiencies, to the extent that such deficiencies exist, and in fact if they were implemented too early that would likely be counterproductive. Therefore, we have determined that implementing extraordinary measures two weeks before the election provides ample time for their intended purpose. That said, we are, and will continue, to look for opportunities to further improve our processes and procedures and to enhance our Election Mail service performance.

Our 650,000 employees are deeply committed to the secure and timely delivery of the nation’s Election Mail and to ensuring that we fulfill our important role in providing a secure, efficient and effective way for citizens to participate when policymakers decide to use mail as part of their elections. We look forward to continuing our work together in a collaborative fashion, and we encourage you to bring specific concerns to our direct attention so we can help in resolving any issues as quickly as possible.

I will reach out next week to Leslie Reynolds, NASS Executive Director, and Amy Cohen, NASED Executive Director, to discuss this matter further, and to schedule a call thereafter with your broader organizations and the other election officials who were signatories to your letter about our Election Mail efforts.

Thank you,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louis DeJoy', is written over the 'Thank you,' text.

Louis DeJoy

cc:

- Amber McReynolds, Vice Chair, USPS Board of Governors
- Ron Stroman, Member, USPS Board of Governors
- Adrienne Marshall, Director, Election and Political Mail, USPS
- Steve Monteith, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President, USPS
- Brendan Donahue, Assistant Inspector in Charge – Criminal Investigations Group, US Postal Inspection Service
- Geoff Guska, Assistant Special Agent in Charge - Criminal Intelligence Program Coordination Division, USPS Office of the Inspector General
- Caitlin Durkovich, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor for Resilience and Response, National Security Council
- Justin Vail, Special Assistant to the President for Democracy and Civic Participation, Domestic Policy Council
- Ben Hovland, Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- Don Palmer, Vice Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission
- U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
- U.S. House Committee on House Administration
- U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
- U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
- U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
- U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary