

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Calls on Postmaster General to reverse harmful changes that have caused mail delivery delays in Wisconsin

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today called on Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Postal Service, to immediately reverse the operational changes and directives that have caused the delays in mail delivery. As Wisconsinites across the state experience delays in receiving their mail, U.S. Postal Service employees have reported that mail sorting machines have been removed or disconnected in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay and Rothschild processing and distribution centers. DeJoy recently announced a temporary suspension of changes through the November election, but has refused to reverse the changes he has already made.

Senator Baldwin wrote, **“While you issued a statement announcing a temporary suspension through the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election of some of the harmful changes you put in place, your announcement did not reverse the damage already done or put in place long-term solutions to prevent further delays. Millions of Wisconsinites - among them veterans, seniors, small business owners, rural communities, and voters - depend on USPS and I am calling on you to take action to prevent further delays in mail delivery.”**

In her letter, Baldwin recounts a few of the many stories she has heard from Wisconsinites who are deeply frustrated with delays under Mr. DeJoy’s tenure. Those stories include: a senior citizen from Hartford whose medication has been delayed; a small business owner in Mequon seeing significant delays in getting

products to customers; a Wausau veteran who relies on USPS for receiving prescription medications from the VA; and a voter in Whitefish Bay who requested an absentee ballot in June and still had not received it just days before the August 11<sup>th</sup> primary.

**“These concerns from my constituents are real, they are not a ‘conspiracy theory’ as some have suggested, and they show why you need to reverse the changes that have led to these harmful delivery delays,”** Senator Baldwin continued.

The full letter to Postmaster DeJoy is available [here](#) and included below.

Dear Mr. DeJoy:

I am writing to demand that you immediately reverse harmful operational changes and directives that you instituted and which have resulted in delayed mail in Wisconsin and across the country. While you issued a statement announcing a temporary suspension through the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election of some of the harmful changes you put in place, your announcement did not reverse the damage already done or put in place long-term solutions to prevent further delays. Millions of Wisconsinites – among them veterans, seniors, small business owners, rural communities, and voters – depend on USPS and I am calling on you to take action to prevent further delays in mail delivery.

The following steps should be taken: mail sorting machines that have been disconnected since you assumed office as Postmaster General must be turned on so that they can serve Wisconsinites. You also must reverse directives preventing letter carriers from taking extra trips to ensure that mail is delivered and ensure that postal employees have access to and are granted overtime so that they can ensure timely delivery of mail.

I have heard from Wisconsinites across the state deeply frustrated by delayed mail under your tenure as USPS Postmaster General. A senior citizen in Hartford, Wisconsin wrote that he and his wife use CVS Caremark to get mailed prescriptions and that the service had worked like clockwork. But, in July, his wife experienced a delay in receiving her mailed prescription medication and had to seek an emergency prescription from her doctor so that she could get access to medication deemed critical to her health. A Mequon, Wisconsin small business owner wrote to me that her small business experienced significant delays in sending products to

customers, with nearly 1,500 items in July failing to reach customers in a timely manner. In desperation she switched to a private carrier, even though the costs for small packages are significantly higher than with USPS. And a Wausau, Wisconsin veteran in her 80's who relies on USPS for receiving prescription medications from the VA wrote to me about delays and how it was particularly difficult for her to experience this during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also heard from a voter in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin who had requested in June a vote-by-mail ballot for the August 11<sup>th</sup> primary election but had not received it just days before the election. These concerns from my constituents are real, they are not a "conspiracy theory" as some have suggested, and they show why you need to reverse the changes that have led to these harmful delivery delays.

My office has further spoken to USPS employees who report that mail sorting machines have been removed or disconnected in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay and Rothschild processing and distribution centers. In Green Bay, nearly a third of the mail processing machines have been disconnected raising grave concerns about the ability of the location to handle influxes of mail, including ballots for the upcoming November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. In Milwaukee, I am aware of four Digital Barcode Sorting Machines (DBCS) that were removed and that each of these machines can sort approximately 35,000 pieces of mail an hour.

At a Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs hearing on August 21, you said you would not require disabled sorting machines to be restarted, claiming, "they're not needed." The delays my constituents are experiencing along with the expected surge of mail-in ballots makes clear that these machines are needed and I am calling on you to immediately turn these mail sorting machines back on.

Postal employees have also informed me of mail being left behind and piling up at locations. They report significant reductions in authorization of overtime, even as many locations deal with employees at home due to exposure to the coronavirus. It is critical that USPS properly authorize overtime so that timely delivery of mail is not compromised.

President Trump admitted that in order to protect himself politically, he's willing to delay the delivery of ballots and interfere with the right to vote. The U.S. Postal Service is, by law, fundamental service provided to the people by our government, authorized by the Constitution, created by an Act of Congress, and supported by the people. The Trump Administration should start treating it as such.



Sincerely,