
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 973 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY DeLUCA, MILLARD, HILL-EVANS, WILLIAMS,
SCHLOSSBERG, ZABEL, FREEMAN, McNEILL, A. DAVIS, NEILSON,
GREEN, DRISCOLL, SAMUELSON, T. DAVIS, LONGIETTI, ROZZI,
HOWARD, HARKINS, SANCHEZ, CIRESI, KINSEY, MADDEN, DELLOSO,
PASHINSKI, KENYATTA, KIM, HOHENSTEIN, MALAGARI, READSHAW,
MERSKI, KORTZ, YOUNGBLOOD, McCLINTON AND DEASY,
AUGUST 25, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 25, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the history and importance of the United States
2 Postal Service.

3 WHEREAS, The United States Postal Service (USPS) is a
4 critical pillar of the infrastructure and economy of the United
5 States; and

6 WHEREAS, The USPS provides an important service to residents
7 of the United States, including residents of Pennsylvania, by
8 ensuring the secure and timely delivery of mail; and

9 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has long recognized the importance of a
10 postal service; and

11 WHEREAS, This recognition can be traced to the establishment
12 of Pennsylvania's first post office by William Penn in 1683; and

13 WHEREAS, Benjamin Franklin also had a major impact on the
14 development of the USPS; and

15 WHEREAS, Benjamin Franklin was appointed postmaster of

1 Philadelphia by the British Crown Post in 1737; and

2 WHEREAS, At that time, postmasters were often newspaper
3 publishers and restricted the free flow of information by
4 excluding rival newspapers from the mail; and

5 WHEREAS, Benjamin Franklin was, along with William Hunter of
6 Virginia, named joint postmaster general for the Crown on August
7 10, 1753; and

8 WHEREAS, As joint postmaster general, Franklin instituted
9 many improvements to the postal system; and

10 WHEREAS, Several of those improvements included establishing
11 a standardized postage rate chart based upon weight and
12 distance, facilitating the free flow of information by
13 instructing postmasters to admit all newspapers to the mail for
14 a small fee, encouraging postmasters to establish the penny
15 post, where letters not called for at the post office were
16 delivered for a penny and instituting overnight postal travel
17 between New York and Philadelphia; and

18 WHEREAS, Colonial-era post offices in Pennsylvania and other
19 colonies laid the framework for American independence by
20 facilitating communication and information sharing; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1774, Benjamin Franklin was dismissed as joint
22 postmaster general by the Crown for being too sympathetic to the
23 American colonies; and

24 WHEREAS, At the end of Benjamin Franklin's tenure as joint
25 postmaster general, post roads operated from Florida to Maine
26 and into Canada; and

27 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1775, the Second Continental Congress
28 created the position of postmaster general and named Benjamin
29 Franklin to the post; and

30 WHEREAS, Postmaster General Franklin was in office when the

1 Declaration of Independence was signed and continued as
2 postmaster general until November 7, 1776; and

3 WHEREAS, The current USPS descends from the postal system
4 that Benjamin Franklin placed in operation; and

5 WHEREAS, The Articles of Confederation gave the United States
6 government the power to establish and regulate post offices; and

7 WHEREAS, These powers were preserved in Article I, Section 8,
8 Clause 7 of the Constitution of the United States, which gives
9 the Congress of the United States the power to establish post
10 offices and roads; and

11 WHEREAS, The postal service received one-year and two-year
12 extensions in the years immediately following the adoption of
13 the Constitution of the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, On February 20, 1792, President George Washington
15 signed into law the Postal Service Act, which established the
16 Post Office Department, which was continued indefinitely by the
17 Act of May 8, 1794; and

18 WHEREAS, Early Federal laws concerning post offices
19 prioritized the security, privacy and timely delivery of mail
20 and furthered the freedom of the press by ensuring that
21 newspapers could be mailed at low postage rates; and

22 WHEREAS, The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 transformed
23 the Post Office Department into the United States Postal
24 Service, and provided for many changes to the postal system; and

25 WHEREAS, The postal service has served and continues to serve
26 a critical role in the development of the United States,
27 providing for communication, commerce and information sharing
28 between people in distant parts of the United States; and

29 WHEREAS, This critical role and the importance of mail is
30 perhaps best exemplified by an inscription on the former

1 Washington, DC, Post Office, which reads:

2 Messenger of Sympathy and Love

3 Servant of Parted Friends

4 Consoler of the Lonely

5 Bond of the Scattered Family

6 Enlarger of the Common Life

7

8 Carrier of News and Knowledge

9 Instrument of Trade and Industry

10 Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance

11 Of Peace and of Goodwill

12 Among Men and Nations;

13 and

14 WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of mail

15 by the USPS has enabled individuals to receive essential

16 products, such as face masks and disinfectants, that are

17 necessary for COVID-19 mitigation; and

18 WHEREAS, The USPS has also enabled individuals to stay in

19 touch with loved ones during this crisis; and

20 WHEREAS, The secure and timely delivery of mail by the USPS

21 has enabled voters to mail in their ballot and participate in

22 elections across the United States, including a primary election

23 in Pennsylvania; and

24 WHEREAS, Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many voters do not feel

25 safe casting an in-person ballot in the general election and

26 therefore plan to vote by mail; and

27 WHEREAS, Many states have expanded access to mail-in voting

28 in an effort to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 at in-

29 person polling locations; and

30 WHEREAS, State vote-by-mail programs rely upon the integrity

1 of the USPS, especially with respect to security and timely
2 delivery; and

3 WHEREAS, The finances of the USPS have been hamstrung by
4 various acts of the Congress of the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, The USPS is expected to generate enough revenue to
6 pay for itself; and

7 WHEREAS, The USPS has not generated a profit since the Great
8 Recession began in 2007; and

9 WHEREAS, The current postmaster general of the United States,
10 Louis DeJoy, has served in the position since June 2020, and is
11 the first postmaster general in two decades who did not rise
12 through the agency's ranks; and

13 WHEREAS, Immediately after his appointment as postmaster
14 general, Mr. DeJoy announced an "operational pivot" which
15 includes eliminating overtime for many workers and mandating
16 that late-arrival mail be left behind by mail carriers and
17 delivered the next day; and

18 WHEREAS, Data from the American Postal Workers Union, which
19 represents approximately 200,000 postal workers, shows that
20 nearly 20% of work completed by mail handlers, city carriers and
21 postal drivers is completed in overtime; and

22 WHEREAS, In light of the USPS's deficit, these operational
23 changes were ostensibly made to cut costs and reduce the
24 agency's deficit; and

25 WHEREAS, Many groups have expressed concern that these
26 changes will have the effect of slowing the delivery of mail;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Many State vote-by-mail programs require that
29 ballots be postmarked or delivered by a certain date, or the
30 ballot will not be counted; and

1 WHEREAS, Any delay in the processing of mail may result in
2 the nullification of legitimately cast ballots, thereby
3 depriving voters of their sacred right to have a voice in
4 government; and

5 WHEREAS, Operational changes at the USPS should not determine
6 whether a voter's ballot is counted in an election; therefore be
7 it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commemorate the
9 history and importance of the United States Postal Service; and
10 be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the Congress
12 of the United States to provide the necessary funding for the
13 USPS; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
15 postmaster general to reverse any operational change that has
16 the potential or actual effect of slowing the timely delivery of
17 mail; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn, oppose
19 and firmly stand against any attempt to undermine or politicize
20 the crucial role of the USPS; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn, oppose
22 and firmly stand against any attempt to alter the USPS or the
23 services it provides for partisan advantage; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
25 each of the presiding officers of Congress, each member of the
26 Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation and each member of the
27 Postal Service Board of Governors.