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**CITY OF NEW YORK JOINS LAWSUIT TO STOP PRESIDENT TRUMP FROM  
UNDERMINING U.S. POSTAL SERVICE AND NOVEMBER PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION**

*Disruptions in mail could cause delays to delivery of life-saving medications, tax refunds, and  
mailed ballots*

**NEW YORK**—The City of New York today joined a coalition of states and cities from across the country in filing a lawsuit to stop the Trump Administration’s attempts to dismantle the United States Postal Service (USPS) and disrupt operations in an effort to undermine the November presidential election. The suit—filed against President Donald Trump, the USPS, and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy—comes a day after the postmaster general finished testifying before Congress in which he refused to reverse policies that have slowed mail operations across the nation.

In recent weeks, the USPS—under Postmaster General DeJoy’s directives—has begun to scale back operations that would significantly undermine the USPS’s ability to handle what is expected to be a record number of mail-in ballots this November because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The slowdown is already having life-threatening impacts on veterans and seniors who are not receiving medication, and economic impacts on individuals waiting for their pensions and paychecks.

“The Trump Administration will not silence the voice of New Yorkers by trying sabotage the USPS,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Our city won’t stand for partisan political games that disenfranchise voters and put at risk the health and safety of New Yorkers who depend on the postal service to secure food, medicine, and housing.”

“Americans have a right to government institutions that fulfill their missions without any kind of bias,” said **Corporation Counsel James E. Johnson**. “For decades, the U.S. Postal Service operated in such a manner. Until now. This is the people’s Post Office. The mail should not ship faster or slower based on one’s political affiliation or the political strategies of the occupant of the White House. Now, more than ever, New Yorkers are relying on the Post Office to be true to its motto and to deliver lifesaving medicine and election ballots. Lives and our democracy may depend on it.”

The U.S. federal mail system has been a critical part of American infrastructure since before the United States declared its independence. For more than 200 years, the federal postal service has provided reliable, vital services to millions of Americans, and, for the last 50 years, the USPS

has acted as an independent agency—severed from the president’s cabinet—in an effort to ensure its political independence. But, earlier this year—in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic—a new postmaster general was appointed, who immediately led efforts to begin an “operational pivot” to overhaul how the USPS collects, processes, and delivers mail throughout the country.

In today’s lawsuit—filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and led by New York Attorney General Letitia James—the coalition of three states and two cities argues that significant and recent changes to USPS operations under DeJoy’s leadership have substantially delayed USPS mail in the City of New York and across the country. These include removing mailboxes and mail sorting machines, curtailing overtime for USPS staff, prohibiting late and extra trips that ensure mail is delivered on a timely and consistent basis, institutionalizing other policies that cause further delays, and creating confusion regarding what election mail standards the USPS will follow in advance of the November general election.

The suit further alleges that changes in USPS operations are in line with President Donald Trump’s repeated and public statements in opposition to mail-in voting and his intent to impair the delivery of mailed ballots by cutting off the resources needed for the USPS to operate because mailed ballots would specifically harm Republicans’ abilities to win elections, even going so far as to make clear last month in a tweet that “Republicans, in particular, cannot let this happen!”

These changes reflect a significant departure from USPS service standards, fail to adhere to USPS’s statutory obligations, and fail to recognize USPS’s historic and critical role in America’s infrastructure. Further disconcerting is the fact that these changes come at a time when New York and the rest of the country—due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic—are relying on mail more than ever to deliver timely and critical services, including medication and other items, legal notices, and, crucially, election mail, as Americans near the November general election.

The USPS is an essential part of the U.S. economy, providing vital services at levels that no other delivery system comes close to providing, including:

- Nearly 120 million Veterans Affairs prescriptions are sent annually by mail;
- 20 percent of adults over the age of 40 who take medication for a chronic condition receive prescriptions by mail, and more than half of the people who receive medication by mail are over the age of 65;
- 18 percent of Americans pay their bills via the mail, including 40 percent of seniors;
- Nearly one in five Americans receive their tax refund through the mail;
- Approximately 40 percent of small businesses send packages through the USPS monthly; and
- More than 42 million ballots were mailed to Americans in the 2018 midterms, and 80 percent of overseas members of armed services who voted did so by mail in 2018.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of New York relies more heavily on the USPS to deliver vital benefits to those suffering from food and housing insecurity, including SNAP benefits, cash assistance, rental subsidies, and life sustaining medications. Delays in mail

delivery of even a day will put these already vulnerable populations at even greater risk, deny them safe access to life's necessities, and force many to jeopardize their own health by traveling to local offices seeking temporary assistance.

The USPS's recent changes will have a significant impact on all Americans. The USPS currently delivers 48 percent of the world's mail, and in fiscal year 2019, delivered 143 billion pieces of mail to 160 million delivery addresses. In New York alone, the number of voters that will cast an absentee ballot is anticipated to be at least 10 times the number of such voters who cast absentee ballots in the 2016 presidential election — expected to exceed more than one million this year — despite the decrease in COVID-19 infections New York is seeing from its peak earlier this year. And states that are still seeing significant surges in COVID-19 infections may see even larger increases in the number of voters requesting to vote by mail or by absentee ballot. Limiting these vote by mail options may result in voters further risking their health by voting in-person during an unprecedented pandemic.

The USPS is currently capable of delivering ballots to any American who requests one. In fact, just last week, the USPS publicly stated that even if all 330+ million Americans in the country requested some form of a vote by mail ballot, that would only account for 75 percent of a single day's mail delivery, which typically tops 470 million pieces of mail each day. However, efforts to drastically alter USPS's operations could severely undermine the USPS's ability to fulfill these requests.

The coalition specifically argues that efforts to undermine both the USPS and the November elections are in violation of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, the Postal Reorganization Act, and the Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The coalition asks the court to vacate all the recent changes made by USPS and halt the USPS from further implementing the changes because they violate statutory and constitutional law.

Joining Corporation Counsel Johnson and Attorney General James in filing today's lawsuit are the attorneys general of Hawaii and New Jersey, and the city and county of San Francisco, CA.

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