

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2025

Postmaster General David Steiner
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General Steiner,

We write to you to demand an in person meeting in October to discuss persistent, severe, and widespread breakdowns in mail service in the St. Louis area, which are impacting constituents across Missouri and Illinois. As you are aware, for years, the Missouri and Southern Illinois Congressional delegations have raised alarms about delays, missing mail, and mishandled election ballots, complaints we heard from countless constituents. These problems were extensively documented in the recent audit conducted by the USPS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) at the request of both Congressional delegations. Our constituents deserve to know how specifically the USPS is taking action to restore dependable service, and we are requesting to meet with you immediately to understand the path forward.

Since 2022, we have been hearing from constituents about delayed medications, late utility bills, missing Social Security checks, and lost election ballots that have disenfranchised Missouri and Southern Illinois voters. In our letters to USPS leadership, including those sent on [February 20, 2024](#)¹, [September 11, 2024](#)², [April 1, 2025](#)³, and [June 25, 2025](#)⁴, we implored the Postal Service to take action. The USPS's failure to address these concerns swiftly and thoroughly has had a severe impact on our communities.

A particularly worrying breakdown in service occurred in Franklin County, Missouri, during the April 8, 2025, municipal election, when the local election authority received 350 absentee ballots after the election deadline. 110 ballots arrived two weeks after the election⁵ and late ballots continued to trickle in until August 20, 2025, which election officials believe was due to processing delays at the St. Louis Processing and Delivery Center. Furthermore, out of the 618 absentee ballot requests by Franklin County residents, only 197 were returned on time. These ballots, although mailed by voters in a timely manner, were not counted, disenfranchising constituents who relied on the USPS to uphold their right to vote. This incident underscores the real-world consequences of USPS's systemic failures, stripping Missourians of their electoral voice and eroding trust in both the Postal Service and the voting process.

Similar breakdowns in service have occurred across Southern Illinois. Nearly 300 formal constituent complaints over the past calendar year have included misplaced family documents, late prescription refills and utility bills, and even the lost human remains of a recently passed loved one. The real-world implications of these failures are undeniable.

¹ Letter sent from Rep. Wagner to Postmaster General DeJoy.

² Letter sent from Reps. Graves, Luetkemeyer, Wagner, and Smith to Postmaster General DeJoy.

³ Letter sent from Sens. Hawley and Schmitt and Reps. Wagner, Onder, Smith, Graves, and Burlison to Inspector General Hull.

⁴ Letter sent from Rep. Bost to Inspector General Hull.

⁵ Franklin County Clerk Tim Baker on municipal election failures. https://www.missourian.com/local_news/franklin-county-clerk-tim-baker-reacts-to-trumps-call-for-voting-changes/article_4a990bde-00fc-4c94-b630-a239121e8012.html

We appreciate the USPS OIG for exposing the depth of the service problems in the St. Louis region in its August 2025 audit of the St. Louis Processing and Distribution Center (St. Louis P&DC), the Network Distribution Center (NDC), and seven associated delivery units (Ballwin, O'Fallon, St. Charles, Maryville Gardens, Southwest, Clayton, and Creve Coeur). The audit revealed systemic failures that validate our constituents' frustrations and include the following urgent issues:

- **Unprecedented Mail Delays:** On June 3-4, 2025, the St. Louis P&DC recorded over 2.5 million pieces of delayed mail, ten times higher than typical audit findings and the largest backlog in USPS field audit history. Local USPS management obscured the scale of the delayed mail backlog by instructing employees to log delayed mail as comments, excluding it from data tracking systems.
- **Staffing and Supervision Failures:** Chronic vacancies, unchecked truancy, and a lack of supervisory oversight have crippled operations. Management failed to correct these issues or ensure proper training, contributing to systemic inefficiencies.
- **Operational Inefficiencies:** The P&DC did not meet clearance times due to ill-prepared mail, inadequate placarding and staging, and incomplete preventative maintenance (only 39% completed against a 90% target), rendering automation ineffective. At the NDC, 40% of outbound truck trips from May 2024 to April 2025 were late, canceled, or required extra trips due to driver shortages, contractor no-shows, and dock congestion.
- **Security and Scan Compliance Issues:** Registered mail was not secured with proper hand-to-hand procedures or documentation, risking loss or theft. Load and unload scan rates fell well below the 93% target, undermining mail tracking. At the NDC, poor placarding practices and scan failures further compounded inefficiencies.
- **Management Incompetence:** Leadership at both facilities failed to identify systemic issues, such as extra trips or data collection errors, and lacked knowledge of proper procedures to address them. The audit noted a lack of oversight and training, with management unable to correct employee non-compliance.

These findings go beyond mere incompetence; they represent a profound failure of leadership and management that has deprived Missourians and Southern Illinoisians of the reliable mail service they deserve.

For too long, the St. Louis region has suffered from unreliable mail service. These failures have caused significant hardships, including delayed prescription medications, late payments incurring fees, and lost election ballots, which threaten the integrity of our democratic process.

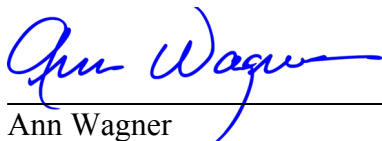
We are encouraged by the division director's commitment to act on all OIG recommendations, including addressing staff shortages, improving supervision, and ensuring proper maintenance and data accuracy. We ask that the USPS engage transparently with Congress and the public as it addresses the OIG's recommendations. Specifically, we would like to meet with you to discuss:

- **Action Plan for OIG Recommendations:** Provide a detailed timeline and specific steps USPS is taking to implement the OIG's August 2025 audit recommendations, including addressing staffing shortages, improving supervisory oversight, ensuring proper maintenance, and enhancing data accuracy at the St. Louis P&DC and NDC.

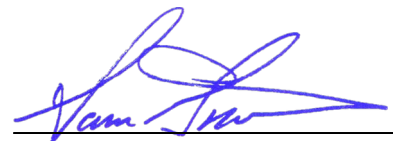
- **Resolution of Mail Delays:** Outline immediate and long-term strategies to eliminate the unprecedented mail delays, such as the 2.5 million pieces of delayed mail recorded on June 3-4, 2025, and address the practice of obscuring delayed mail data by logging it as comments.
- **Election Mail Integrity:** Propose specific reforms to prevent future disenfranchisement, such as the 350 late absentee ballots in Franklin County during the April 2025, municipal election, and ensure timely processing and delivery of election mail.
- **Community Impact Mitigation:** Discuss how USPS will address the real-world consequences of service failures, such as delayed medications, late utility bills, missing Social Security checks, and their financial and personal impacts on constituents.
- **Leadership and Management Reforms:** Explain how USPS will address the audit's findings of management incompetence, including steps to improve leadership knowledge, oversight, and ability to correct systemic issues and employee non-compliance.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Commit to regular, transparent updates to Congress and the public on progress toward resolving these issues, including metrics for improved service reliability and management accountability.
- **Personnel Accountability Measures:** Detail the specific processes and criteria USPS will use to evaluate and hold accountable personnel, including management and staff, whose actions or inactions contributed to the systemic failures identified in the OIG audit, including any disciplinary actions, reassignments, or terminations as deemed appropriate to restore operational integrity.

Postmaster General Steiner, we appreciate your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to working with you to restore reliable service across our region and welcome the opportunity to engage directly and practically on the USPS's plan to ensure our constituents have access to accurate, efficient, timely, and dependable mail.

Sincerely,



Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



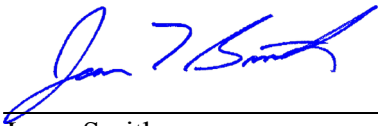
Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Robert F. Onder, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jason Smith
Member of Congress



Mark Alford
Member of Congress



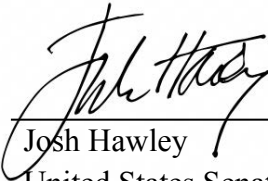
Eric Burlison
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Wesley Bell
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Josh Hawley
United States Senator



Eric S. Schmitt
United States Senator