

Testimony of

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Before the

**Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General
Government**

**“A Hearing to Review the FY 2022 Budget Request for the USPS Office of
Inspector General and USPS Service Issues.”**

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Good afternoon Chairman Van Hollen and members of the Senate Appropriations, Financial Services, and General Government Subcommittee. My name is Brian McLaurin; as a long time Maryland resident, I was thrilled to join USPS in 1998 as a driver with the Motor Vehicle Service division of the Brentwood Postal Facility, now known as the Curseen-Morris Mail Processing and Distribution Center. I'm proud to say that I have been driving tractor-trailers for the Postal Service for 23 years. I also serve as the Motor Vehicle Craft Director of the American Postal Worker Union's Nation's Capital/Southern Maryland Area Local. I have held this elected position since 2009. Our local represents around 2,000 dedicated postal workers who serve their community and nation every day.

I have personally witnessed the slow and steady decline and delay of our nation's mail. Over the years, postal workers were empowered to move the mail on time through a variety of tools such as overtime, and waiting for mail to be loaded on their truck before heading out. If some mail didn't make it on the truck, that wasn't a serious problem since we made multiple trips early in the day, and sometimes extra trips to move the mail. Today, however, we leave mail behind because we make fewer trips, are understaffed, and are required to stick to rigid delivery schedules which require drivers like me to leave with trucks that are not fully loaded.

To make matters even worse, postal facilities are short-staffed; so, when mail finally arrives at a station, there aren't enough workers to process mail and get it out for delivery. I have personally witnessed on countless occasions, the same mail sitting in the facility for two or three days. Postal employees get to it when they can, but they must be directed by management. As a result, family members, neighbors, and window clerks regularly tell me heart wrenching stories about how critical packages are not being delivered.

Concern over mail slowdowns is not isolated to my home state of Maryland. My national union shared with me over 130,000 comments to the Postal Service which were submitted in opposition to management's current proposal to further reduce service standards. The comments share a common theme: people are concerned about the current delays of the mail and are pleading against any efforts to erode the system further.

My personal accounts are a case study of a larger problem, which will only worsen if we do not act. The Postal Service's ten-year plan outlines an agenda to further slow the mail--despite the documented failures of its most recent slowdown.

After 2012, USPS initiated a plan to cut costs, by slowing down the mail and closing postal facilities. In reality, according to public filings at the PRC, the plan caused USPS to lose \$65.9 million in its first year due to increased transportation costs as mail was being driven further due to the shutdown of several postal facilities.

The Southern Maryland P&DC facility, which is represented by my local, was one of the first victims of this policy. Under this policy, rather than quickly process mail in as few facilities as possible, mail now needed to be shuttled from its origin facility, to Gaithersburg, an hour away for the postage to be canceled, and then shuttled back to the Southern Maryland Facility P&DC, for further processing. This “shuttling” is a key culprit as to why the mail is slow.

In 2016 and 2017, the USPS Inspector General found that USPS eventually managed to stabilize its losses but still only saved 5.6% of the anticipated savings, despite slashing jobs and decreasing the level of service Americans deserve. USPS also [lost business](#) when it slowed down the mail. As the [Postal Regulatory Commission warned](#), when mail service slows, [people use the mail less](#).

USPS must stop slowing down the mail and begin the process of returning to its 2012 service standards. Returning USPS to the 2012 service standards would return overnight delivery for many areas and speed up mail delivery times by one day for the remaining mail.

I learned from my national union that in the current appropriations process, APWU is urging this committee to guarantee a baseline level of service for USPS performance, as well as for facility, and window hours. Congress should add language to the FSGG Appropriations bill which will:

1. Ask the PRC to look at the costs and benefits of returning USPS to its 2012 service standards
2. At a minimum prohibit USPS from reducing its service standards, mail delivery times, facility hours, post office operation/window service hours, and performance metrics below its 2020 levels

The Postal Service remains a bedrock of public service and must be protected from misguided managerial attempts to run trucks on time and outrageous efforts to reduce the speed of the mail. Fortunately, this committee can both protect our nation from yet another mail slowdown and place USPS on a path to restoring the level of service Americans deserve.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my story.