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Heitkamp Statement on President Creating a Postal System Task Force

Last Month, Senator Introduced Bipartisan Legislation to Stabilize & Reform U.S. Postal Service, Improve Operations & Service in Rural America

[Click Here](#) to View Heitkamp's Medium Post on her Efforts to Improve Postal Service & Delivery for Rural North Dakotans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp today issued the following statement after the president signed an executive order creating a task force to offer recommendations to reform the U.S. Postal Service and make the agency financially solvent.

“There is simply no substitute for the Postal Service in rural America. In many cases, the Postal Service has been a great equalizer, enabling Americans no matter where they live to get their mail and packages in a timely, affordable manner—and that’s especially important for families and businesses in rural communities like those across North Dakota,” **said Heitkamp.** “I agree with the president that we must act quickly to revitalize this integral American institution, and it is important for this task force to examine why the Postal Service is in its current financial state. For years, I’ve been working on legislation to reform the Postal Service, improve how it works, and make it financially viable. And just earlier this month I helped write and introduce a bipartisan bill to do just that. I hope this task force seriously considers our thoughtful and carefully crafted bill. We need to address the root causes of the financial difficulties the Postal Service has been experiencing for the past decade, so that we can preserve the Postal Service and give it the tools to provide sustainable, reliable, and affordable mail delivery to rural communities— just as our bill would do.”

The 2007-2009 recession, the growth of e-commerce, and declining mail volume have all hit the Postal Service hard. Additionally, the agency has faced an aggressive schedule to prefund retiree health benefits 75 years into the future—one that no other public or private entity faces and one that was placed on the Postal Service in 2006. Last year, the Postal Service reported a

net loss of \$2.7 billion – the 11th year in a row they reported net losses. President Trump’s executive order creates a task force on the U.S. Postal System that will build a series of recommendations to reform the Postal Service and evaluate ways to address challenges related to a decline in mail volume, the expansion of e-commerce, and the role the Postal Service plays in the U.S. economy and rural America. The cuts that the Postal Service has been forced to make as a result of the root causes of their financial difficulties have come at a price to the postal customer and have led to the continued degradations in mail delivery and services, especially in rural America.

Last month, [Heitkamp introduced her bipartisan bill to improve U.S. Postal Service operations, service, and transparency](#) to stabilize and preserve the U.S. Postal Service. Heitkamp’s compromise legislation would put the Postal Service—which processes and delivers nearly half of the world’s mail without using any taxpayer dollars to operate—on a path to financial stability and help prevent a taxpayer-funded bailout of the agency. The bill would make key changes to mandated prefunding requirements, as well as employee and retiree health care by creating a new health benefits plan for postal employees and retirees, and requiring Medicare-eligible retirees and employees to enroll in Medicare. These changes would save a significant amount of money over time, protect employee benefits in retirement, prevent the disruption of critical postal services in rural areas, and protect the American taxpayer. Heitkamp’s bill would also prioritize strong service reforms that put the postal customer first by improving mail service performance across the country while also requiring transparency and enforcement to ensure the Postal Service’s accountability.

Heitkamp’s efforts to reform the Postal Service build on her Fix My Mail initiative, which she launched in 2014 to gather feedback from North Dakotans about challenges with their mail delivery and service. Throughout the years-long effort, she has heard from hundreds of North Dakotans about problems with mail delivery, and she brought those stories to the Postal Service to push for changes.

In 2016, [Heitkamp launched her Fix My Mail survey](#) to gather feedback from North Dakotans about challenges with their mail delivery and service. The survey was inspired by her original [Fix My Mail initiative](#), which she started in January 2014 when she heard from more than 200 North Dakotans about their frequently poor mail delivery. Those stories prompted the Postal Service to take action in North Dakota, and at Heitkamp’s request, the U.S. Postal Service Inspector General issued a [report confirming](#) the problems North Dakotans had shared with Heitkamp.

Background

Heitkamp’s work in the U.S. Senate to improve mail delivery and service issues for North Dakotans also includes:

- **Resolving chronic mail issues in Fargo and Halliday.** In January 2016, Heitkamp [pressed](#) U.S. Postmaster General Megan Brennan on [severe](#) mail [issues](#) in

South Fargo. After reviewing the performance, the Postal Service brought in a carrier with 30 years of experience. At [Heitkamp's urging](#), the Postal Service announced in January it would [reopen the Halliday post office](#). Since the day the Halliday post office's was closed and on a near-daily basis thereafter, Heitkamp and her office pressed Brennan and the Postal Service to [take urgent and concrete steps](#) to protect mail service to the community.

- **Bringing Postmaster General to North Dakota.** After sharing her Fix My Mail survey results with U.S. Postmaster General Megan Brennan, [Heitkamp invited the Postmaster General to visit North Dakota](#) so she could see for herself the mail challenges that exist at processing facilities and to hear directly from community members and businesses about the solutions needed to improve their mail delivery and service over the long term. Brennan [accepted Heitkamp's invitation](#) and [in August 2016 visited](#) a Bismarck mail processing facility and a Mandan post office with Heitkamp, and spoke directly with North Dakotans in Bismarck about the chronic challenges they face in accessing reliable mail service.
- **Gathering feedback from North Dakotans to hold the Postal Service accountable and achieve results.** Since Heitkamp [launched](#) her [Fix My Mail survey](#) in February 2016, she has received hundreds of responses from North Dakotans about specific mail delivery challenges – the vast majority of which contained personal stories about the issues they had experienced. Heitkamp [relayed these challenges](#) to Brennan and [requested a prompt response](#) to improve mail service.
- **Inspiring change at the U.S. Postal Service.** Inspired by Heitkamp's [Fix My Mail initiative](#) and [survey](#), the Postal Service [launched a new customer service program](#) aimed at improving mail delivery and service. The 'Your Mail Matters' program is encouraging North Dakotans to share their mail service challenges with the Postal Service via email, YourMailMatters@usps.gov, and a service line, 605-333-2648, which is managed and operated by the Postal Service District Office in Sioux Falls, S.D.