



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

National Headquarters
1727 KING STREET, SUITE 400
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2753
(703) 836-9660

Office of
National President

Ivan D. Butts

December 3, 2021

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy
United States Postal Service
470 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Rm 10022
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Reauthorization of Full Presence of Postal Police Officers (PPOs)

Dear Louis:

I write to request your immediate reauthorization of the full presence of Postal Police Officers back on the streets in cities across America in support of United States Postal Service field operations. This move is vital to the protection of the safety of thousands of postal employees and the safety of the mail.

As you know, violent crime and homicides are on the rise throughout the nation and are increasing dramatically. FBI data shows homicides are up 30 percent. These trends should be of particular concern to the Postal Service because of their impact on postal operations and postal employees. Last year, according to Chief Postal Inspector Gary Barksdale, the Postal Inspection Service responded to more than 7,000 reports of violent crimes against postal employees, including threats, assaults and homicides. In just the past two months, the Inspection Service has investigated four shooting incidents targeting employees that left four dead and another seriously wounded.

Mail theft is also increasing dramatically, heightening concern. According to the Office of Inspector General of the Postal Service, mail theft complaints increased by 161 percent from March 2020 through February 2021. Robberies of access collection boxes, outdoor parcel lockers, cluster box units and apartment panels are on the rise. "Ineffective" and "irresponsible" internal controls over the use of universal keys, known as arrow keys, are a major cause, the Office of Inspector General has found. In addition, thefts in broad daylight of trays and bags of mail and packages from postal carts, postal vehicles and postal carriers are increasing in numbers and frequency, according to anecdotal and statistical reports. According to an NBC report last year, Postal Inspection Service data showed that mail theft reports soared by 600% over the past three years, from about 25,000 in 2017 to roughly 1777,000 through August, 2020. Mail has been stolen so many times at an apartment complex outside Seattle, Washington, NBC reported, that carriers avoid leaving unemployment and Social Security checks. Burglaries of post offices also have been reported in scores of locations across the country. These are not one-off events. They are part of a wider effort often linked to gangs and criminal networks aimed at stealing, altering and cashing checks to amass personal information from stolen mail to commit identity theft.

Even more troubling are criminal assaults on letter carriers themselves by perpetrators aiming to steal mail and packages at any price. Thefts of arrow keys from the possession of letter carriers, sometimes at gun point, are not uncommon. The perpetrators sometimes are drug-addicted and psychotic persons looking for gift cards and

Representing supervisors, managers and postmasters in the United States Postal Service

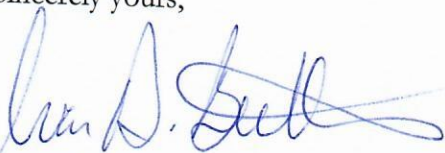
cash to use to buy their next drug hit. These kinds of accounts are almost daily documented by local media. Public confidence in the Postal Service and the safety of the mail will continue to decline as these reports mount.

We cannot allow these kinds of assaults upon carriers and other postal employees to continue. Greater protection of postal employees and facilities needs to occur, involving coordination with local, state and federal law enforcement authorities. While the Postal Service cannot alone reduce crime, the Postal Inspection Service needs to use its resources more smartly, including optimization of its Postal Police Officer (PPO) workforce. Greater PPO surveillance and patrols of high-risk neighborhoods, especially along the routes that carriers cover, is necessary. In fact, until 15 months ago, the Postal Service had maintained a longstanding practice to routinely conduct PPO patrols of carrier routes in high-risk areas. Patrol coverage also was devoted to the protection of some postal facilities in high-risk areas at opening and closing times. These practices ceased, however, when the Postal Inspection Service on September 22, 2020 issued its Management Communication on Postal Police Utilization, restricting PPO's from leaving their duty station without prior approval, even to engage in the federal law enforcement activities associated with the performance of their PPO responsibilities.

Under the new (and still current) USPS policy, PPO coverage of carrier routes typically no longer occurs, and police presence at postal facilities is much more limited. PPOs have been restricted from taking action even when felonies against postal employees occurred in their presence. As a result, USPS field operations today are at significantly greater safety risk, even as crime rates worsen. The safety of letter carriers and other postal personnel themselves are at greater risk. The need to repeal the above-referenced Inspection Service Management Communication is clear. Without such action, more assaults and homicides against postal employees are likely, and public confidence in the safety of their mail will erode further.

Many PPO supervisors are members of the National Association of Postal Supervisors. Every day these brave individuals and their subordinates – along with letter carriers and other personnel – put their lives on the line for the Postal Service and the American public. Their safety should not be further compromised by ill-advised postal policy. I ask you to promptly reauthorize the full presence of Postal Police Officers back on the streets in support of United States Postal Service field operations.

Sincerely yours,



Ivan D. Butts
National President

cc: Douglas Tulino, Deputy Postmaster General and Chief Human Resources Officer
Gary R. Barksdale, Chief Postal Inspector