



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh, Coalition of Attorneys General to File lawsuit over Trump Administration’s Attempts to Undermine Postal Service

Severe Operational Cuts Could Hobble Postal Service Just Months Before National Election

BALTIMORE, MD (August 18, 2020) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Maryland is joining a multistate coalition in filing a federal lawsuit challenging drastic operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service that threaten critical mail delivery and could undermine the national election in November.

The Postal Service cuts, including eliminating staff overtime, altering operations at state distribution centers, and removing critical mail sorting equipment, threaten the timely delivery of mail to individuals who rely on the Postal Service for everything from medical prescriptions to ballots.

“Trump attacks on the postal service are designed to disrupt the election. They strike at the core of our democracy,” said Attorney General Frosh. “That is bad enough, but Trump and DeJoy are also hurting innocent bystanders: Americans who are waiting for their medicine or their social security checks. This conduct is harmful, illegal and unconstitutional. We are filing suit to stop it.”

The states’ lawsuit will assert that the Postal Service implemented these drastic changes to mail service nationwide unlawfully, and seeks to stop the agency’s service reductions. The changes at the Postal Service come as President Donald Trump has continued to baselessly claim that widespread vote-by-mail will lead to a fraudulent election.

Postal Service changes:

Recent changes at the Postal Service instituted by Trump-appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy have already resulted in mail delays, Congressional leaders argue. Those changes include eliminating staff overtime, changing the way mail is sorted and requiring late-arriving mail to be left for delivery the following day.

The Postal Service has also announced plans to stop processing outgoing mail at some state mail distribution centers. This would disproportionately impact rural communities, often significantly

increasing the distance mail must travel. For example, mail sent from one address to another in the same town would have to travel all the way to one of the remaining distribution centers and back again before being delivered.

Vote-by-mail elections:

Many states require that ballots received on or before Election Day to be counted. President Trump stated that the service cuts at the Postal Service has a partisan motive: “They need that money in order to make the Post Office work so it can take all of these millions and millions of ballots. They don’t have the money to do the universal mail-in voting. So therefore, they can’t do it, I guess,” Trump said last week.

Impacts on seniors and veterans:

Postal Service cuts threaten timely mail deliveries for a range of important services, from prescriptions to utility bills. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many Americans, especially seniors and other high-risk individuals, to rely increasingly on mail delivery services while they stay at home for their health. In general, seniors rely heavily on the mail to receive essentials like medications, Social Security benefits and even groceries.

The policy changes have already impacted our country’s veterans, who are reporting much longer wait times to receive mail-order prescription drugs. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), which provides broad health care services to veterans nationwide, fills about 80 percent of veteran prescriptions by mail. The VA processes about 120 million mail-order prescriptions per year — 470,000 a day. The Postal Service makes daily prescription deliveries to 330,000 veterans across the country.

Legal claims:

The attorneys general assert that the Postal Service has acted outside of its authority to implement changes to the postal system and did not follow the proper procedures under federal law. The law requires that changes at the U.S. Postal Service that cause a nationwide impact in mail service must be submitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission. The commission then evaluates the proposal through a procedure that includes public notice and comment. The federal government’s failure to perform this mandatory duty deprived the states of their statutory right to notice and comment on USPS’ nationwide service changes.

The states’ lawsuit seeks to block the unlawful service reductions and operational changes at the Postal Service. In addition to Maryland, the suit was joined by the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced a complementary multistate lawsuit to be filed in Pennsylvania.

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