

Postal Regulatory Commission
Public Field Hearing
U.S. Postal Service Station and Branch Optimization Initiative
September 23, 2009, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
O’Keefe Commons in O’Hare Hall,
Rose Hill Campus, Fordham University
441 East Fordham Road
Bronx, New York

Good morning Chairman Goldway and other distinguished members of the Postal Regulatory Commission. My name is Larry Cirelli and I have been a letter carrier for over 22 years. I have also served as the National Business Agent for the National Association of Letter Carriers representing our members in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and the territories of Puerto Rico since 2006. I want to thank you for holding this very important hearing today on the future of the United States Postal Service and the potential downsizing of its network. I truly believe that downsizing the postal service’s network would be just as detrimental as the current proposal from the Postmaster General to reduce delivery days. I see and speak to letter carriers everyday and I can tell you that the overall sentiment of the general public is not in favor of any of these reductions in service. I have seen the same public polling that you have seen, and I know that the response to cuts in service has been overwhelmingly popular. However, the public has not been offered alternatives – they have simply been given an ultimatum, can they live with facility closures and reduced delivery days if it will save the Postal Service? Well,

when asked the question in that format who wouldn't say yes? Had anyone mentioned that communities will be underserved and post offices will be crowded – both for customers and postal employees - who will be forced to work out of fewer stations. Couple these closures with reduced delivery days and just imagine the impact it will have on small businesses, prescription drug delivery, financial transactions and more. The result on communities nationwide will be very damaging.

The seven proposed office closings we are here to discuss today (Botanical, Bronx Hub, Clason Point, Crotona Park, Hillside, Melcourt, Oak Point and Van Nest) would have a devastating affect on our local postal patrons, in particular our senior citizens. Many of whom would be forced to travel increased distances to get to a post office and most of whom who have to do so without use of a car. They would be forced to endure increased personal costs to travel to other offices, using buses and subways, instead of simply walking. Paying bills and sending letters to family and friends would become a hardship. Remember - - the Postal Service in a previous and controversial cost cutting measure has already removed a large number of blue collection boxes across the area and the country. We are leaving our customers behind by limiting our presence in communities and now we are here talking about shutting our doors – this is outrageous. The word “service”

should not become a distant memory, but rather the one most important factor of the USPS that we continue to provide and expand with the use of our unique network. We should be providing easier and greater service to our patrons, not making it harder.

Over the long run, rather than downsizing the Postal Service we should be looking at how we can better use its unique network to expand business opportunities in new ways. We should experiment with utilizing our “last mile” advantage in areas beyond traditional mail, whether that means conducting the census or national polling, delivering medications or helping law enforcement in any number of ways. There are endless opportunities for the Postal Service, but it will never be able to take advantage of them if we begin closing our doors and limiting our services to our customers as a knee jerk reaction to a temporary and fixable problem.

The Postal Reform Legislation of 2006 was designed to help the Postal Service deal with the public’s increased internet use by giving it more flexibility to compete in competitive services that continue to grow. As I just mentioned, I believe that more and more innovative ways of using the mail and the network. We must ensure that the Postal Service does not make structural decisions that will do more harm than good over the long run. Downsizing to meet depression-level

demand without considering the long-term impacts on the ability of the Postal Service to meet new demands when the economy recovers would be short-sighted. Short-term savings that undermine the Postal Service's capacity to offer new services and to take advantage of future growth opportunities (such as Vote by Mail, e-commerce deliveries, and the other potential uses of our incomparable delivery network) would be self-defeating. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today, I would happy to answer any questions you may have.