

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 15, 2011

The Honorable Ruth Goldway  
Chairwoman  
Postal Regulatory Commission  
901 New York Avenue NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20268

Dear Chairwoman Goldway,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Postal Service's proposal to close up to 3,653 post offices. We would appreciate your inclusion of this letter in your formal record of comment. We appreciate the dire fiscal condition of the Postal Service and the need to change the Postal Service's business model to protect its viability and the service it provides to American consumers and businesses. Unfortunately, widespread post office closures are the wrong way to deal with the Postal Service's fiscal problems, and they could harm the Postal Service's competitiveness in the long run.

The Postal Service's unparalleled retail network actually is a competitive advantage, as several business representatives noted at a joint House/Senate hearing on the Postal Service. This expansive retail network provides several vital services:

- It fulfills the Postal Service's universal service obligation, providing connections for rural communities which would otherwise be isolated.
- It creates business opportunities for private mail delivery services, which rely on the Postal Service for the last mile of delivery in most parts of America.
- It creates business opportunities for small businesses and online entrepreneurs which deliver their products through the mail, because no other delivery service provides low cost deliveries like the Postal Service.
- It creates business opportunities for the \$1 *trillion* mailing industry, which includes suppliers, retailers, advertisers, and packagers.
- It protects the health of seniors by ensuring reliable delivery of prescription drugs through the mail.

The law requires that "the Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas." (39 U.S.C. 101(b)). However, the USPS is centering its downsizing efforts on small post offices (its Postal Regulatory Commission filing lists 2,825 post offices that earn less than \$27,000 per year). These low-earning post offices tend to be located in rural areas. A reduction of this size would have a

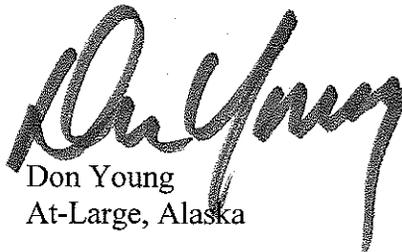
severe negative impact on rural America, threatening the viability of thousands of small towns across America. Village Post Offices will not fill this void and do not offer all regular postal services, thus, failing to provide the maximum degree of effective service.

Underlying this post office closure proposal is the premise that drastic cuts in costs are the only way to maintain the solvency of the Postal Service. This assumption is inaccurate, and once again we are presented with false choices. The Postal Service would still have positive net revenue today except for the requirement that it prefund 100% of employee retirement and retirement health costs, a requirement that Congress imposed on it in 2006. No other public or private business in America faces this onerous and unnecessary requirement, and Congress could give the Postal Service breathing room to recalibrate its business model simply by repealing this retirement prefunding requirement. So too Congress could allow the Postal Service to use some of the \$50-\$75 billion that Postal Service employees and customers overpaid to the Treasury during the last thirty years. Simply correcting this overpayment would do far more to protect the solvency of the Postal Service than closing small rural postal facilities. Finally, Congress should remove restrictions which prevent the Postal Service from selling products closely associated with postal products. Thanks to the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, the Postal Service can't even sell postal-related products and services such as wine and beer shipment. Congress should allow the Postal Service to operate like a business rather than punish rural America for the strictures that Congress placed on the Postal Service in 2006.

We greatly appreciate the PRC's careful consideration of this proposal and your longstanding efforts to understand the multifaceted benefits provided by the Postal Service. It is no less valuable today than when Pony Express riders raced across the American frontier. This Constitutional institution must be strengthened, not eviscerated, because it continues to improve quality of life for our constituents while creating more than a trillion dollars of private sector business activity. Widespread closure of post offices should be rejected in favor of more thoughtful reform that fixes the errors of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act and finally allows the Postal Service to behave like a business and ensures the requirement to provide universal service is fulfilled.

Sincerely,

  
Gerald E. Connolly  
11<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia

  
Don Young  
At-Large, Alaska

Heath Shuler  
11<sup>th</sup> District, North Carolina

Morgan Griffith  
9<sup>th</sup> District, Virginia

Barney Frank  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Massachusetts

Leonard Boswell  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Iowa

Earl Blumenauer  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Oregon

Michael Michaud  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Maine

Sanford Bishop  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Georgia

Cedric Richmond  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Louisiana

Dave Loebsack  
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Steve Rothman  
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Tim Ryan  
17<sup>th</sup> District, Ohio

Gene Green  
29<sup>th</sup> District, Texas

John Yarmuth  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Kentucky

Adam Schiff  
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Alcee Hastings  
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Raul Grijalva  
7<sup>th</sup> District, Arizona

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Anna Eshoo  
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Dale Kildee  
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Maurice Hinchey  
22<sup>nd</sup> District, New York

Marcia Fudge  
11<sup>th</sup> District, Ohio

Colleen Hanabusa  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Hawaii

Paul Tonko  
21<sup>st</sup> District, New York

Ruben Hinojosa  
15<sup>th</sup> District, Texas

Rush Holt  
12<sup>th</sup> District, New Jersey

Bill Owens  
23<sup>rd</sup> District, New York

Grace Napolitano  
38<sup>th</sup> District, California



Gary Ackerman  
5<sup>th</sup> District, New York



Russ Carnahan  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Missouri



David McKinley  
1<sup>st</sup> District, West Virginia



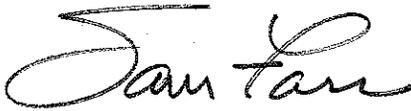
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
MP, Marianas Islands



Jose Serrano  
16<sup>th</sup> District, New York



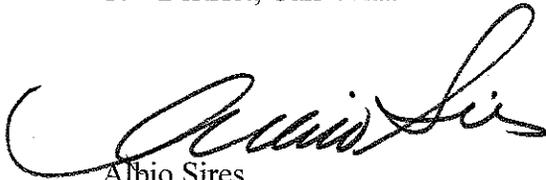
Joe Baca  
43<sup>rd</sup> District, California



Sam Farr  
17<sup>th</sup> District, California



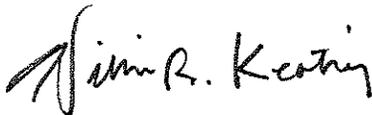
Loretta Sanchez  
47<sup>th</sup> District, California



Albio Sires  
13<sup>th</sup> District, New Jersey



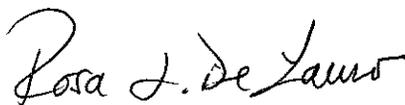
Jesse Jackson, Jr.  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Illinois



William R. Keating  
10<sup>th</sup> District, Massachusetts



Bill Johnson  
6<sup>th</sup> District, Ohio



Rosa DeLauro  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Connecticut



Gary Peters  
9<sup>th</sup> District, Michigan



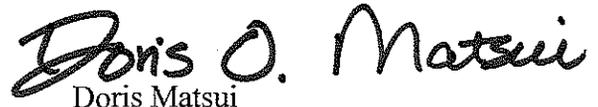
Mazie Hirono  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Hawaii



Ben Ray Lujan  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, New Mexico



Bob Filner  
51<sup>st</sup> District, California



Doris Matsui  
5<sup>th</sup> District, California



Mike Doyle  
14<sup>th</sup> District, Pennsylvania



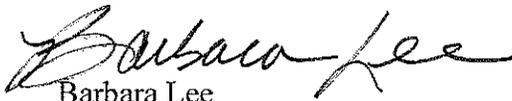
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
At-Large, District of Columbia



Pete Visclosky  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Indiana



Nick J. Rahall, II  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, West Virginia



Barbara Lee  
9<sup>th</sup> District, California



Mark Critz  
12<sup>th</sup> District, Pennsylvania



Mike Ross  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Arkansas



Mike Thompson  
1<sup>st</sup> District, California



Jim Himes  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Connecticut



Jo Ann Emerson  
8<sup>th</sup> District, Missouri



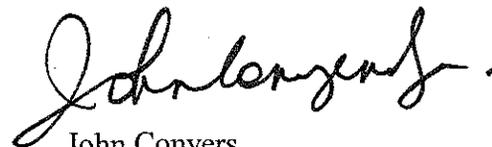
Tammy Baldwin  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Wisconsin



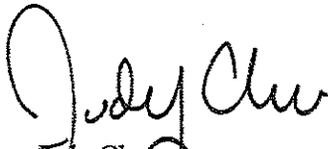
Henry Cuellar  
28<sup>th</sup> District, Texas



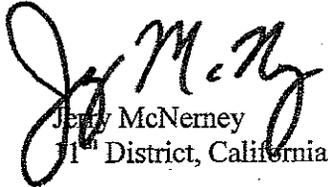
Michael Grimm  
13<sup>th</sup> District, New York



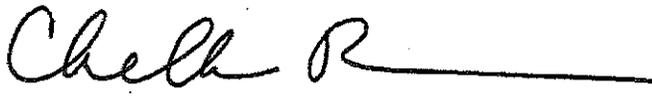
John Conyers  
14<sup>th</sup> District, Michigan

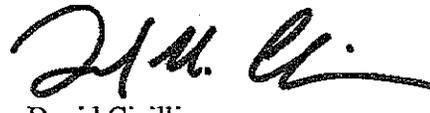
  
Judy Chu  
32<sup>nd</sup> District, California

  
Lynn Woolsey  
6<sup>th</sup> District, California

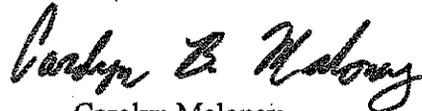
  
Jerry McNerney  
11<sup>th</sup> District, California

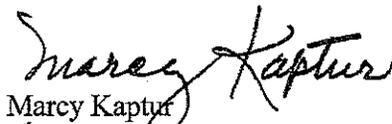
  
Jerrold Nadler  
8<sup>th</sup> District, New York

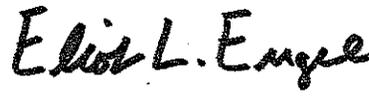
  
Chellie Pingree  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Maine

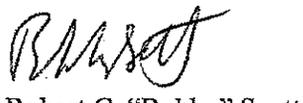
  
David Cicilline  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Rhode Island

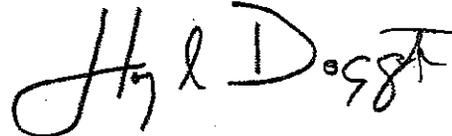
  
Bill Pascrell  
8<sup>th</sup> District, New Jersey

  
Carolyn Maloney  
14<sup>th</sup> District, New York

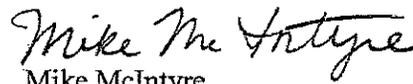
  
Marcy Kaptur  
9<sup>th</sup> District, Ohio

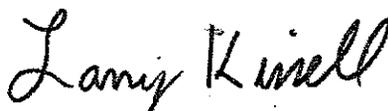
  
Eliot Engel  
17<sup>th</sup> District, New York

  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Virginia

  
Lloyd Doggett  
25<sup>th</sup> District, Texas

  
Shelley Berkley  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Nevada

  
Mike McIntyre  
7<sup>th</sup> District, North Carolina

  
Congressman Larry Kissell  
8<sup>th</sup> District, North Carolina

  
Chris Murphy  
5<sup>th</sup> District, Connecticut