

Testimony of Rich Griffin, NSALC

Las Vegas PRC Field Hearing -- May 10, 2010

Good afternoon Chairman Goldway and distinguished members of the Commission. My name is Rich Griffin and I am working Letter Carrier here in Las Vegas. I have carried the mail for more than 30 years. Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Nevada State Association of Letter Carriers, where I have responsibility for tracking national and state legislative issues.

This city is famous for FUN, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For visitors, Las Vegas is a 24-7 vacation. For the hotels, vendors, and companies that operate here, it's a 24-7 business city. That's why cities like Las Vegas need mail services at least six days a week. And that's why I urge this Commission to reject the Postal Service's proposal to eliminate Saturday delivery.

But Saturday delivery is also important to ordinary Nevadans, whether they are seniors who rely on mail-order prescription drugs and the timely delivery of their Social Security checks, consumers who purchase fresh fruit or other goods online, or readers of church bulletins and weekend newspapers. As a letter carrier, I can tell you that eliminating Saturday delivery would cost the Postal Service much more over the long run than any short-term savings from slashing the quality of service and eliminating 75,000 city and rural letter carrier jobs.

I know first-hand the bond that letter carriers develop with the patrons on our routes, particularly with small business owners and residential customers. I have developed a special relationship with the people on my route. Letter carriers are the face of the Postal Service. Because we get to know the people we serve, they know they can trust us with their private communications and business transactions. We are the brand, to use the jargon of business. Since most Americans work Monday through Friday, cutting Saturday delivery would damage that Brand, that relationship of trust. It would be extremely short-sighted to eliminate any day of service, but especially on the day of the

week that most people get to meet us and interact with us. This is not just some warm and fuzzy bit of nostalgia; it will have serious and negative revenue consequences for the Postal Service.

Let me give you an example that any carrier would understand. Each work week, we attempt to deliver many parcels to residents who are not home. We leave them a card that allows them to tell us whether they want to come down to the Post Office and pick up their packages or have us deliver them on another day. Most of them ask us to come back on Saturday when someone will be home. Going down to the local Post Office, which is often closed before they leave for work in the morning and after they get home from work at night, is just too inconvenient. If we force all of them to pick up their own parcels, we are going to discourage online shopping and the use of the Postal Service for the part of the mail-stream that is actually growing. Worse we would give up the day of delivery that makes us special – forcing our customers to pay huge premiums to get Saturday delivery from private couriers.

Similarly, ending Saturday collections from the blue collection boxes will slow service and lead many more mailers to opt out of the mail. This would compound the error made by the Postal Service in recent years when it removed thousands of collection boxes from neighborhoods around the country. Reducing service and making it harder for Americans to use the mail is the definition of Penny-wise, Pound-foolish.

Finally, let me make an obvious point. I am not ashamed to stand up for the jobs of this state's hard-working letter carriers. No state has been hit harder by the financial meltdown and the recession than Nevada. We have cut lots of carrier jobs in response. But destroying more good jobs by cutting Saturday delivery at a time when we have a jobs crisis makes no sense -- especially when Congress can fix unfair pension and retiree health funding issues that have been the major cause of the Postal Service's recent deficits. I want to thank this Commission for shining a light on these finance issues and urge you to reject the Postal Service's dangerous plan to eliminate Saturday delivery. Thanks again for taking my testimony; I am happy to answer your questions.