

Postal Regulatory Commission
US Postal services Six Day to Five Day Delivery Plan
Hearing held on may 17, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.
Dallas City Hall, L1 Auditorium

Re: Testimony from Bruce R. Sherbet, 326 Sutton Place, Richardson, Texas 75080

Good Afternoon Commissioners:

My name is Bruce Sherbet and I am the Elections Administrator for Dallas County. I was appointed to this position in 1987. I conduct all federal, state and local elections for the county. Some of my job duties include maintaining voter roles for 1.2 million registered voters, maintaining and preparing election equipment and supplies for elections, and I oversee election worker training and voter outreach.

In addition to testifying as Dallas County Elections Administrator, I am here today at the request of IACREOT which stands for the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers. Members from IACREOT have been very helpful with providing me their local perspectives regarding the Five Day Delivery Plan. It is my hope not to be repetitious today but I suspect I may be echoing some of the comments made by my colleague Jill LaVine from Sacramento County, California at your May 12 hearing.

Speaking as an elections administrator, the biggest concerns with reducing from six day delivery to five day delivery revolves around mail balloting and voter registration. Our deadlines in these two areas offer little or no allowances for being late. For a comparison, if a person is late in making a mortgage payment or credit card payment it may result in late fees. If a person is late in returning their voter registration application they can't vote. If a voter is late in returning their mail ballot it won't count. Voting is one of our most precious rights in this country and any changes that could negatively impact voters' needs to be carefully considered prior to implementation. To this end, I very much appreciate the opportunity to address this commission and I'm optimistic that an open dialog can help identify workable solutions.

If mail delivery must be reduced to five days, then a logical solution to protect against voters being disenfranchised is through legislation. Currently, federal law protects military/overseas voters by providing for their ballots to count if they are postmarked timely but are received up to five days after the election. Perhaps, this provision for military/overseas voters could be expanded to include voters that missed the deadline because of no Saturday delivery. Here are a few comments that I have received from IACREOT members regarding the Five Day Delivery Plan:

- Several commented that if mail delivery is reduced by one day, Saturday is the preferred day to eliminate.
- Elimination of Saturday delivery can be addressed effectively by encouraging voters to take more responsibility in ensuring their ballots are applied for and returned in a more timely manner. That's not to say there won't be problems but they can be proactively addressed.
- The impact will be that if a ballot was to be delivered on a Saturday, now that voter will not receive it until Monday. For voters outside the county (if the election is on a Tuesday) that can be problematic because they are at risk that their ballot will not be received timely for counting.

- By statute, we must mail all sample ballots on the Wednesday before an election, most voters received their ballots on Saturday. Receiving a sample ballot on Monday, in my opinion, does not allow the voter sufficient time to review. Mailing ballots prior to Wednesday would prove to be a hardship because of voter registration deadlines which are mandated by law.
- Under the current suggested scenario, voters who receive their ballot on Friday and expect the postal carrier to pick up their ballot at home on Saturday will now have their ballot picked up on Monday. If the next day is election day, this situation will risk the ballot not being delivered on time. I expect we will see an increase in ballots arriving Wednesday and Thursday, and we can't count those.
- I fully expect that elimination of Saturday delivery will be followed by elimination of another day, such as Wednesday, in the future.
- Election materials may have to be timed for delivery if close to election day and the vote is being handled by the mail. In our state, we cannot mail out ballots less than one week prior to an election, so it is not expected to hamper our efforts for local delivery.
- One official suggested these two alternatives; 1). a six day mailing service, initiated nationwide during general elections, 2). Design a special stamp or logo for election ballots to identify them and ensure they are delivered on weekends.

Overall, the consensus of the comments that I received were mostly centered of making sure voters were not disenfranchised because of the reduction of mail delivery service. In conclusion, there was a common thread in the comments that I received that focused on educating voters on the change and also possibly seeking legislative relief for those that may unfortunately fall through the cracks.

Again, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address these concerns today.

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