

The USPS and the Promise Of A Fair Election Are Under Attack. Here Are the Things We Can Do

With the USPS and the upcoming election muddled in doubt, here are some of things we can do to help

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80 days. 80 more days until the United States general election. It's a year where you seemingly blink and you find yourself in another month. On November 3rd, will all be collectively exercising our right to vote to choose our state and local officials, house and senate reps, and the next president of the United States. But this year isn't like any other year. The COVID-19 pandemic is still very much present and in the fall, will coincide with the flu season. For some, in-person voting will not be an option due to the risk of the virus. This is why mail-in-voting will be a very needed and crucial necessity to make sure every registered and eligible American can cast their vote.

In recent weeks, there have been some disturbing revelations regarding our country's capacity to ensure the upcoming election will be fair. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a known Trump donor and a man who still owns a \$30 million stake in a USPS contractor has been at the forefront of many questionable changes within the US Postal service. The U.S. postal service sent a letter to 46 states stating that ballots sent by mail might not arrive in time to get counted. There was also a proposition to remove 20% of mail sorting machines across the country as well as many changes internally that have delayed mail receipt. It's not only mail-in-voting that we have to worry about - it's people receiving vital medications, packages, and sending things like rent checks. You know that vaccine that is going to come for COVID-19? The USPS will have to deliver it. Small businesses depend on the USPS and without each other, many people will lose jobs and vital resources.

Why defend the USPS? Based on principle should be enough. However, the service itself is a pillar in the U.S. constitution. The constitution empowered Congress "to establish post offices and post roads," in 1789. The USPS also employs 600,000 workers. - many to which are veterans, women, and Black, Latino, and Asian backgrounds. It would be a shame to cut a diverse workplace at the knees.

Contrary to what is being repeated by the President, voter fraud is extremely rare within the United States. Absentee voting has been done since the Civil War. His unfounded claims continue to happen as he has requested a mail-in-ballot to vote in this upcoming election. We have five states right now that allow for all their elections to be done by mail. Now, some people may get absentee ballots and mail-in ballots confused. Absentee ballots are requested by a person when they are unable to vote in person. Mail-in-ballots/voting constitutes state policies in which they allow that to happen. I'm sure many of us agree that the current times would warrant that.

What are some of the things that we can do now to see that this upcoming election is as fair as possible?

1. These are the USPS Board of Governors. (Diverse bunch, huh?) Call and email them. Let them know that what is going off with the Postal Service is not acceptable. They have the power to review, roll back any changes, and remove Postmaster Louis DeJoy if need be. Not to mention, Congress has the ability to place people on the Board of Governors - hence why all parts of this election are vital.

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1. Call your state representatives. Both the house and senate are on recess and there's an immense need for oversight and emergency hearings. Not only that, but representatives should be working on passing the comprehensive relief bill to provide the necessary funds for the USPS to operate in totality. It should be more than having concerns at this point. Urge your representatives to tour local USPS facilities since they are home. Call your district offices of your senators.

The CARES Act that was passed in May would accolate \$25 billion to the USPS, but the Senate is currently on recess with a return date slated for September 8th. The general election is about 90+ days away and absentee ballots will start rolling in soon. We should be in an emergency session to make sure all of this is taken care of. Our postal workers need PPE and hazard pay as they are essential workers.

2. Locate where your ballot drop box is now in your county. It may come down to organizing with your local community and making a ballot dropoff initiative. Check with your elderly, your immunocompromised neighbors, and family members to see if they need their ballots to be taken.
3. Register to vote and request your ballot per your state. Tell your family and friends to do the same because there is only a finite amount of time. If your state offers it, I would highly encourage early voting as well.
4. Senator Gary Peters of Michigan is leading an investigation into mail slowdowns. If you are experiencing this, please fill out this form on his website.

It doesn't matter what side of the political spectrum you are on. You should want a free and fair election to occur for all. The President has made it clear that he is against funding the USPS for mail-in-ballots or for the service to withstand the capacity to. We already have problems with poll places closing, election day not being a national holiday is it is in other countries and rampant voter disenfranchisement. Time is short. Let's get to work because the very basis of what our democracy is built upon depends on it.

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