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President's Commission on the United States Postal Service
1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 971
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Members of the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service,

We, the State Board of the Oregon Rural Letter Carriers Association, are working rural letter carriers employed by the US Postal Service. We would like to share our thoughts and concerns in regard to the current state of affairs within the USPS. We would like to thank each of you for your service in this area and ask that you keep an open mind on all issues before you. Hundreds of thousands of postal employees will be affected by the decisions that your commission will make.

The USPS has developed a Transformation Plan that contains strategies to be more competitive with private business. The USPS has been unable to implement all these strategies due to regulatory and legislative constraints. They now have hopes of gaining additional powers such as: the ability to negotiate rates with mailers; control more of the ratemaking process; possibly eliminate Saturday deliveries; and gain more power over how much it pays its workers.

We believe that the Postal Service needs to be put back on budget, ratemaking restrictions need to be removed, and allowances made for the Postal Service to raise and lower rates to compete with private industry. This would allow competition with private industry while at the same time providing universal service and congressionally mandated non-profit and handicapped services to the American public. The USPS cannot be privatized without removing the Universal Service mandate, and we believe this would be disastrous to rural America.

When considering the question of privatization for the Postal Service please also consider that with all its' many problems, the US Postal Service is still the best mail service in the world and is mandated to provide universal service to all Americans. If the Postal Service were privatized, unprofitable smaller rural offices would soon be closed. Private mailers like Airborne Express only deliver packages that they can make a profit on. They bring their packages that go to rural areas (that they can't make money on) to the USPS for delivery because we provide service to everyone. Who would meet the needs of these people if all mail services were for profit only? This is why the USPS must remain a nonprofit organization. Mail service is something everyone wants and needs

and the entire country benefits from. The loss of universal quality service could eliminate the ability of every American to be able to send or receive mail to or from anyone in the world. Everyone wants it, many still believe it is tax subsidized and we believe few would be unwilling to support it with tax dollars rather than what was needed to keep from losing it.

Poor management practices and politics are the root cause for most of the problems that now exist in the USPS. Uncaring and untrained managers daily make decisions based on how the numbers look, rather than on sound business practices, with little or no regard for customer service or employee morale. The USPS used its expertise to influence an arbitrator to gain an advantageous decision over the rural carrier craft last year. The APWU has recently seen its power base slip away as automation continues to decimate the ranks of postal clerks. And city letter carriers have, for the first time in recent years, seen their salaries slip in relation to benchmark UPS salaries. This is a serious issue for the Postal Workers of our country. We see postal workers who care about doing a good job, who are seeing that their employer is caring less and less about them and quality service and more about cutting their wages and scrimping on service to make it look like they are running a successful business. We do not believe this is a formula for success.

The USPS is facing competition in every facet of its' business and needs to find a way to generate more revenue, while maintaining a quality level of service to its customers, if it is to remain viable. Postal managers need to use sound business practices, treat all employees with dignity, and respect employees as fellow human beings as well as providing a fair and competitive wage.

Thank you for your time and consideration on behalf of the Oregon Rural Letter Carriers Association.

Sincerely,

Marge Carlson
Charles Brown
Joanne Nusom
James C. Sullivan
Roger Leshner
Ruth Feldmann
Scott Murahashi
Bruce Pixley
Ken King
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