

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
11th District, Virginia


Don Young
At-Large, Alaska

Heath Shuler
11th District, North Carolina

Morgan Griffith
9th District, Virginia

Barney Frank
4th District, Massachusetts

Leonard Boswell
3rd District, Iowa

Earl Blumenauer
3rd District, Oregon

Michael Michaud
2nd District, Maine

Sanford Bishop
2nd District, Georgia

Cedric Richmond
2nd District, Louisiana

Dave Loebsack
2nd District, Iowa

Steve Rothman
9th District, New Jersey

Tim Ryan
17th District, Ohio

Gene Green
29th District, Texas

John Yarmuth
3rd District, Kentucky

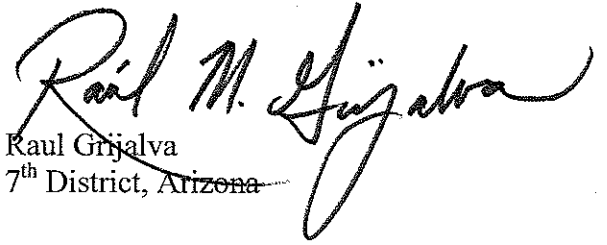
Adam Schiff
29th District, California

Peter Welch
At-Large, Vermont

Alcee Hastings
23rd District, Florida



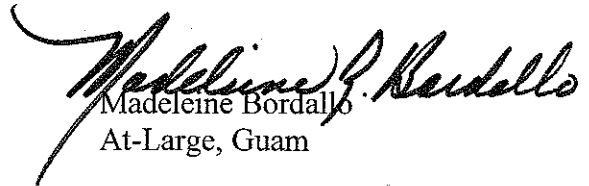
Steve LaTourette
14th District, Ohio



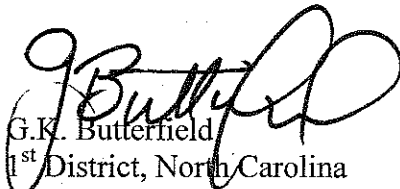
Raul Grijalva
7th District, Arizona



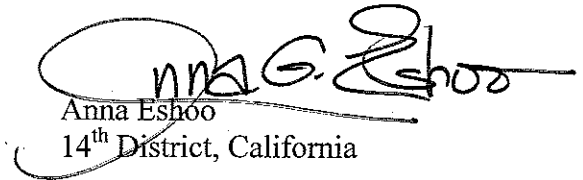
Gwen Moore
4th District, Wisconsin



Madeleine Bordallo
At-Large, Guam



G.K. Butterfield
1st District, North Carolina



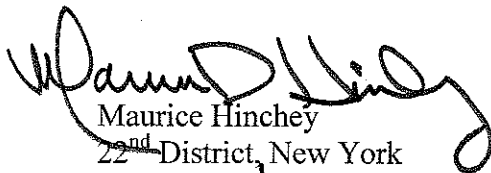
Anna Eshoo
14th District, California



Laura Richardson
37th District, California



Dale Kildee
5th District, Michigan



Maurice Hinchey
22nd District, New York



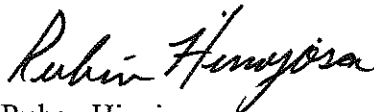
Marcia Fudge
11th District, Ohio



Colleen Hanabusa
1st District, Hawaii



Paul Tonko
21st District, New York



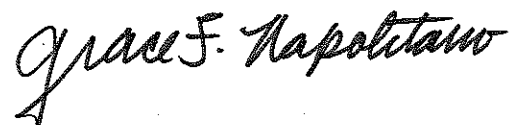
Ruben Hinojosa
15th District, Texas



Rush Holt
12th District, New Jersey



Bill Owens
23rd District, New York



Grace Napolitano
38th District, California



Gary Ackerman
5th District, New York



Russ Carnahan
3rd District, Missouri



David McKinley
1st District, West Virginia



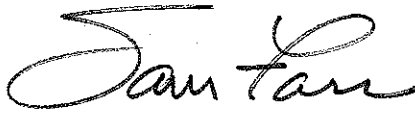
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
MP, Marianas Islands



Jose Serrano
16th District, New York



Joe Baca
43rd District, California



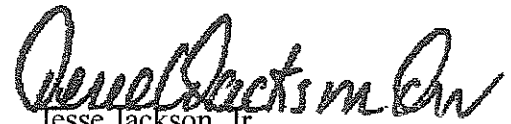
Sam Farr
17th District, California



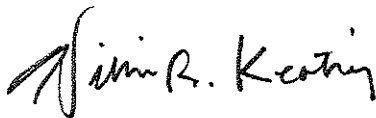
Loretta Sanchez
47th District, California



Albio Sires
13th District, New Jersey



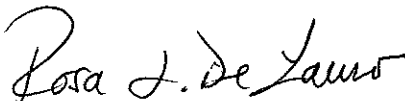
Jesse Jackson, Jr.
2nd District, Illinois



William R. Keating
10th District, Massachusetts



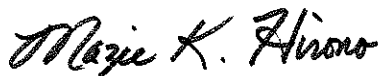
Bill Johnson
6th District, Ohio



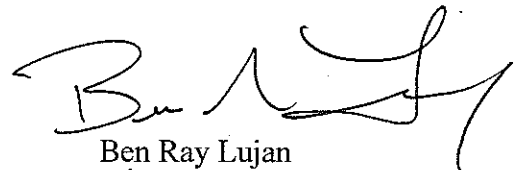
Rosa DeLauro
3rd District, Connecticut



Gary Peters
9th District, Michigan



Mazie Hirono
2nd District, Hawaii



Ben Ray Lujan
3rd District, New Mexico



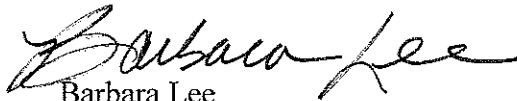
Bob Filner
51st District, California



Mike Doyle
14th District, Pennsylvania



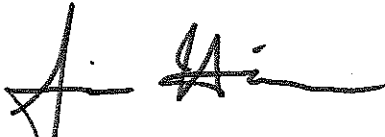
Pete Visclosky
1st District, Indiana



Barbara Lee
9th District, California



Mike Ross
4th District, Arkansas



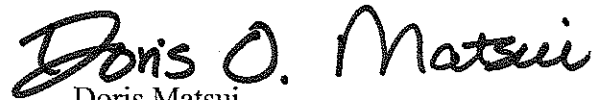
Jim Himes
4th District, Connecticut




Tammy Baldwin
2nd District, Wisconsin



Michael Grimm
13th District, New York



Doris Matsui
5th District, California



Eleanor Holmes Norton
At-Large, District of Columbia



Nick J. Rahall, II
3rd District, West Virginia



Mark Critz
12th District, Pennsylvania



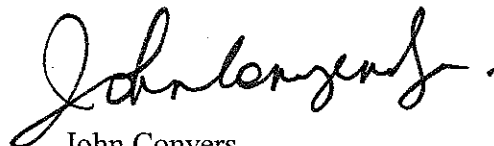
Mike Thompson
1st District, California



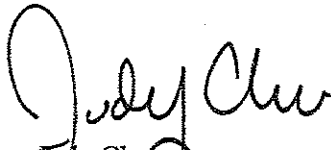
Jo Ann Emerson
8th District, Missouri




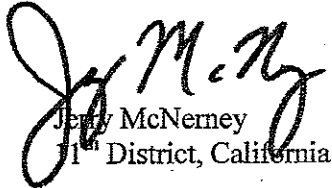
Henry Cuellar
28th District, Texas




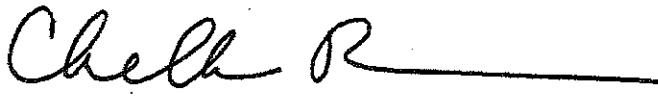
John Conyers
14th District, Michigan

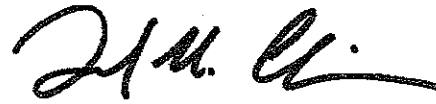

Judy Chu
32nd District, California


Lynn Woolsey
6th District, California

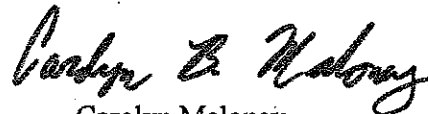

Jerry McNerney
11th District, California

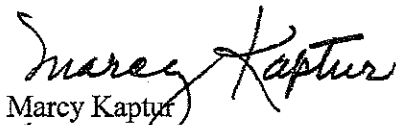

Jerrold Nadler
8th District, New York

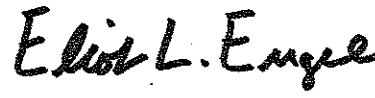

Chellie Pingree
1st District, Maine



David Cicilline
1st District, Rhode Island

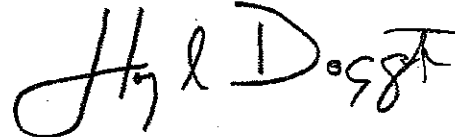

Bill Pascrell
8th District, New Jersey


Carolyn Maloney
14th District, New York

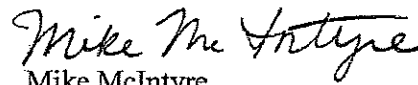

Marcy Kaptur
9th District, Ohio

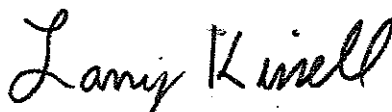

Eliot Engel
17th District, New York

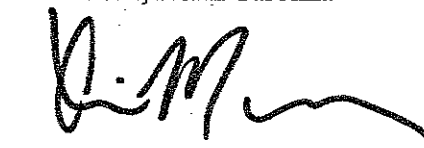

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
3rd District, Virginia


Lloyd Doggett
25th District, Texas


Shelley Berkley
1st District, Nevada


Mike McIntyre
7th District, North Carolina


Congressman Larry Kissell
8th District, North Carolina


Chris Murphy
5th District, Connecticut