

A week before the US Presidential election, USPS management pushes forward unprecedented attacks on mail-in balloting

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With the US presidential election one week away, the United States Postal Service (USPS), led by GOP megadonor Louis DeJoy, has ramped up the drive to privatization and to place a cloud over mail-in balloting.

A day after Postmaster Louis DeJoy testified before Congress in August, promising that he would suspend sweeping changes until after the election, the USPS ordered its uniformed officers to halt their patrol duties, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The USPS employs around 455 uniformed officers who conduct patrols meant to safeguard mail collection boxes, delivery vehicles and buildings against theft, as well as another 1,300 plainclothes detectives who collectively work to ensure the security of the mail.

The order effectively makes the job of a postal worker more dangerous, lessening their security against theft and violence from petty criminals while reducing the integrity of the mail-in ballot, the primary means of voting in the 2020 election. Moreover, given President Donald Trump's constant attacks on mail-in balloting as a supposed vehicle for massive fraud, his open appeals to right-wing militias, including connections to fascistic conspiracies to kidnap and murder state governors deemed too reluctant to lift lockdown measures, it is entirely possible that the purpose of such measures is to render mail-in balloting vulnerable to attacks by right-wing groups.

The order comes after the centralization of USPS management around DeJoy on July 10th, which created a new Logistics and Operations organization led by DeJoy appointees which is responsible for mail processing and independent from existing area and district reporting structures.

According to USPS officials, the Postal Service has already handled over 100 million ballots, a 162 percent increase from the 2016 election. USPS management is deliberately reducing the transparency of the ballot processing, putting into question the outcome of the election. At least five lawmakers have been denied visits to USPS facilities. Rep. Bill Pascrell, a New Jersey Democrat, visited a mail processing center in Kearny, New Jersey, after being refused entry last month, according to his staff. However, Pascrell alongside two other members of the New Jersey congressional delegation never got beyond the lobby.

Postmaster DeJoy has donated over \$1.2 million dollars to the Trump victory fund and millions more to the Republican Party. When he was president of New Breed Logistics, a private USPS contractor, he encouraged his employees to write fundraising checks to the GOP and gave bonuses to offset the costs.

Trump's continuous attacks on mail-in voting are made possible through the complicity of the Democratic Party. Louis DeJoy was elected unanimously through bipartisan consensus, by a Board of Governors composed of both Democrats and Republicans. The most recent three members were elected unanimously via the Senate, which is now composed of 43 Democrats. In the face of Trump's unprecedented attacks on the constitutional right to vote, the Democrats remain impotent, offering nothing more than mere rhetoric.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* stressed in our statement "US Postal Service workers, privatization, and the defense of democratic rights" :

While Trump openly appeals to far-right militias to guard polling stations and intimidate voters and postal workers, the Democratic Party seeks to cover up the threat of dictatorship. Biden and Harris are urging voters to “stay calm” and carry on with electoral processes as usual. The Democrats and all their affiliated organizations, including the unions, refuse to warn the working class of the dangers that exist and mobilize popular opposition. This is because the Democrats and the unions fear a popular movement in opposition to Trump could quickly evolve into a revolutionary challenge to the dictatorial rule of the corporate and financial elite, which the Democrats defend, just as much as Trump and the Republicans.

In a world of stark inequality, where three billionaires own more wealth than the bottom 50 percent of the US population, the ruling class is compelled to turn towards authoritarian forms of rule in order to maintain this diseased social order and violently suppress mass working-class opposition.

All of the trade unions supposedly representing USPS workers have shied away from warning workers of the threat of dictatorship. The American Postal Workers Union’s newspaper has said nothing about the order halting postal officers’ patrol duties and the moves to delegitimize the mail-in ballot. Instead, the union has directed its efforts into support for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Trump and DeJoy’s moves to dismantle any integrity remaining of the Democratic process is tied to the drive to privatization, removing any of the remaining democratic content of the USPS into private hands.

The USPS inspector general released a new report which found that no analysis was conducted of the impact of the broad changes in USPS operations (reduction of overtime, dismantling of mail sorting units, removal of mail boxes, etc.) before the changes were put in place. “The resulting confusion and inconsistency in operations at postal facilities compounded the significant negative service impacts across the country,” the report states. In midst of the manufactured chaos within the USPS, XPO Logistics, which DeJoy formerly headed and holds a multi-

million dollar stake in, has been awarded a \$5 million dollar contract alongside several other multi-million dollar contracts for private firms. While the leadership of the USPS purposely destroys its service capabilities, private firms have stood to reap massive benefits.

The only opposition to dictatorship and privatization is from the working class. There are numerous reports of rank-and-file USPS workers disobeying management in order to deliver essential items to those that need them. This opposition must be mobilized independently of the union and the Democratic Party in rank-and-file committees, uniting with all other sections of the working class, such as teachers and autoworkers, to prepare the way for a political general strike.

The WSWS is leading the struggle is organizing this opposition. To learn more and to join the fight, contact us today .



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