

US Postmaster General floats ending six-days-a-week mail delivery, closing most local post offices

Tom Hall
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Postmaster General David Steiner proposed the most sweeping service cuts in the history of the United States Postal Service in a May 8 meeting of the USPS Board of Governors.

Steiner's opening report to the meeting called on Congress "to remove the mandates that ensure the Postal Service loses money: For example, days and levels of service, the ability to close unprofitable offices, and the underpricing of First-Class Mail. If we had flexibility on those three main issues, we could go a long way towards becoming profitable, but the American public would see reduced levels of service and higher rates."

This amounts to the abolition of USPS as a public service, converting it openly into a for-profit model and setting the stage for its privatization. More than 70 percent of local post offices are unprofitable, according to USPS' own estimates. Combined with cuts to "days and levels" of delivery service, this would lead broad swathes of the country, especially rural areas, without reliable access to mail.

He specifically singled out the post office's Universal Service Obligation: The legal requirement to provide all Americans with postal delivery at uniform prices. "Revenues and savings cannot offset the costs associated with the universal service obligation, our 'USO,' under the current business model. It is unsustainable."

Steiner technically presented this as one of two options before Congress, with the second being substantial increases in federal subsidies for USPS, which operates as an independent, self-funding agency. But nobody should be under any illusions about which route will be taken. The *Wall Street Journal's* editorial board already answered for the ruling class on Monday: "No thanks. Start with option one, and let Mr. Steiner run the business like a business."

The speech confirms the warning by the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee last month that Washington

would use a "manufactured 'liquidity emergency'" to "carry out massive cuts in order to make USPS 'profitable.'" The Committee, formed independently of the pro-management union bureaucracy, urged workers to "build collective power [and] protect our rights."

Following a report to Congress in March warning the USPS could run out of money as soon as next February, management suspended payments into workers' pension programs, "saving" \$400 million on the backs of workers.

But this is only the start. Steiner hired restructuring advisers from consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal in March. His newly appointed Chief Solutions and Strategy Officer comes directly from UPS, which has laid off tens of thousands under its "Network of the Future" program. Steiner himself is a former CEO of Waste Management and former board member of FedEx.

The same day as the Board of Governors meeting, USPS reported a net loss of \$2 billion for the second quarter of fiscal year 2026. Operating revenue rose 2.3 percent to \$20.2 billion, driven entirely by price hikes; volumes are falling across every service category. Amazon re-signed a last-mile delivery agreement but at approximately 20 percent less volume than the prior year. An 8 percent surcharge on priority parcels, tied to rising fuel costs from the war against Iran, is now in effect through January 2027. Stamp prices will rise from 78 cents to 82 cents on July 12.

The financial crisis is the result of a bipartisan project stretching back decades. In 1971, the Nixon Administration demoted the post office from a cabinet-level department to an independent agency, following a massive nationwide wildcat strike the previous year. The requirement that the new agency be self-funding created the framework within which every subsequent round of cuts has been justified.

The latest phase began in 2021, under previous Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's "Delivering for America" restructuring program, which aimed at broadly similar goals to what Steiner is now floating. The program closed

hundreds of facilities, eliminated or redrew thousands of routes and consolidated the system into a smaller number of large, highly-automated distribution centers. Conditions in these buildings are horrendous, with multiple deaths in the last few months, according to an independent investigation by the Postal Workers Rank-and-file Committee.

Dismantling much of USPS is being floated by the ruling class as a solution to close a funding gap of \$2 billion per quarter. But this amount equals roughly two days of the war against Iran, which burned through more than \$12 billion in its opening week. The Trump administration has requested a 50 percent increase in the Pentagon budget to \$1.5 trillion annually.

The attacks on postal services are worldwide. Royal Mail in Britain was privatized in 2013, and sold to Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky in 2024. Now, with the collaboration of the Communication Workers Union, it is imposing mass cuts. Canada Post is preparing to eliminate 30,000 jobs—more than half its workforce—and ending door-to-door delivery.

When Steiner testified before the House Oversight Committee in March, Republican chair Pete Sessions and Democratic ranking member Kweisi Mfume were united in demanding sweeping cuts. Sessions explicitly floated “private industry” as “the path forward” while Mfume declared it was “a pleasure working with this chairman who shares many of my ideas.” USPS has already launched an auction system for private companies to bid on last-mile delivery capacity, undermining its common carrier status, and in many parts of the country already functions effectively as Amazon’s de facto delivery contractor.

The postal union bureaucracy is trying to chloroform postal workers and the public about what is taking place, denying that a crisis exists at all and limiting their “solutions” to within the existing framework. On May 1, the presidents of the American Postal Workers Union, National Association of Letter Carriers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association sent a joint letter to Congress calling for it to raise USPS’ statutory borrowing limit, allow the pension fund to invest in the stock market and change accounting for legacy retirement obligations.

In an April livestream, APWU president Jonathan Smith dismissed the crisis as a “situation,” attacked “negative headlines,” and told workers “victory is only a phone call to Congress away,” berating them for not calling their representatives.

This is all the more significant given three of the four unions’ contracts expire this year, beginning with NALC on May 22. A collective bargaining conference for NALC branch presidents is set for June 1-3 with the union rejecting

any strike action out of hand.

A May 2026 bargaining update by NALC declares: “If an agreement cannot be reached that rewards America’s letter carriers for the hard work they do day in and day out, NALC will not hesitate to present our demands and argue our case in front of an arbitrator.”

The current NALC contract, imposed through binding arbitration after workers rejected the first deal, contains annual wage increases of 1.3 to 1.5 percent.

Postal workers must organize themselves independently of the union bureaucracy in order to defend the post office, rallying behind them workers across the country. In 1970, postal workers launched a wildcat strike that brought mail delivery to a halt across the country, defying President Nixon and anti-strike laws, along with union leaders who ordered them back to work.

Today there is growing opposition across the working class—to mass layoffs, to the war in Iran, to the entire political establishment. The problem is not the absence of opposition but the deliberate sabotage of working class resistance by institutions which claim to represent workers.

The USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the IWA-RFC urges postal workers to insist: the postal service is a public service! It requires full public funding and no cuts to service days or routes.

Postal workers who want to fight back should join or form a rank-and-file committee in their workplace and make contact with the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), which is coordinating resistance among postal workers in the US, Britain, Canada, Australia and beyond.



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