

Mr. Todd Cefaratti
TheTeaParty.net
1717 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 1025
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Cefaratti,

I am writing as an employee of the United States Postal Service and proud member of my union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO. I was forwarded a link to your offensive and misleading petition, where you refer to yourself as a “Freedom Organizer” and make outrageous and factually incorrect statements regarding the USPS’s financial condition and, more importantly, the issue of our over-funded pension accounts.

To set the record straight, you should know that, although First Class mail volume is indeed falling, the Internet is not killing the Postal Service, nor is the weak economy. What is killing the Postal Service is a burdensome congressional mandate, a Bush-era law passed in 2006 that requires the USPS to massively pre-fund the cost of future retiree health benefits over the next 75 years in just 10 years’ time. This cost covers not only current employees but employees who have yet to be hired—and it is on top of the cost for health benefits for current retirees. **No other company or agency in America is required to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.**

The \$20 billion in deficits over the past four years has been the direct result of the \$21 billion in pre-funding payments dictated by the 2006 law. In the absence of this mandate, the USPS would have been profitable over this period despite the worst recession in 80 years, and it would still have borrowing authority to weather the bad economy. As a matter of fairness, the USPS should be allowed to fund retiree health benefits on a pay-as-you-go basis, just as most businesses do.

There is a sensible solution to the postal financial crisis that won’t directly cost any taxpayer money: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which administers the federal and postal employee pension plans, should acknowledge the findings of the two external, private-sector audits that found a pension surplus of between \$50 billion to \$75 billion in the postal portion of the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Congress should allow the Postal Service to use this surplus to cover the cost of pre-funding future retiree health benefits. A bill containing such a solution has been introduced as H.R. 1351, which offers a responsible way of dealing with this financial crisis by allowing the Postal Service access to its own money, funds that are in excess of what they will ever need to pay for pensions. It’s worth noting that H.R. 1351 currently enjoys 193 co-sponsors from both parties, while H.R. 2309, the so-called Postal Reform Act, has a co-sponsorship of one.

I believe it’s fair to say that you have no business advocating for what’s best for the nation’s postal employees, since passage of H.R. 2309 would result in massive layoffs, in reductions in mail delivery service to rural America, and in Congress’ continuing to withhold access to between \$55 billion and \$75 billion of excess pension funds. The National Association of Letter Carriers has represented its members well for 122 years, and I frankly trust it to continue doing so.

Yours truly,

A proud member of the National Association of Letter Carriers