

Save our Service



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When I started with the Postal Service in 1997, there were those senior carriers and union activists who would tell us that the good government jobs that we had could be taken away with the “stroke of a pen.” Many of them were around, whether active or retired, who could recall how the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 created the United States Postal Service. It was a piece of legislation that transformed the old Post Office Department from a Cabinet-level arm of the executive branch to a self-sustaining quasi-government agency. I can’t say that I had ever heard the word “quasi” before, but it was

explained to us that although we were federal employees, the Service was not funded by taxpayers. Instead, we operated like a nonprofit organization that served the American people.

The revenue generated by the service we provided came from the postage paid by our customers and the products we sold. This allowed us to be self-supporting. This would appear to be the perfect arrangement, but we were told that because it was created by legislation it could also be taken away in the same manner. We were reminded that postal workers must remain vigilant in protecting our jobs by supporting people who support us and giving money to our political action fund that supported them. It was viewed as an insurance policy for our jobs.

Back then, like so many other new hires, I didn’t really care about using my hard-earned money for political agendas, but over time I would see that the many threats to the Postal Service were real. On the surface, because of the history of our agency and the obvious necessity of the service we provided, one would think that they could never really get rid of us. But like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, the attacks on us would not present themselves in ways that were clearly detectable.

Propaganda would be spread about the inefficiency of the Postal Service and how it would thrive if it was privatized. Any negative story about us would only fuel speculation about how better off we all would be if we were not a “government” agency. These arguments would conveniently fail to say how a private company

would provide the same level of service to every American address, consistent with the mission statement of the Postal Service and the requirement by law to do so. Title 39 of the U.S. Code reads, in relevant part, that:

The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to **patrons in all areas** and shall render **postal service to all communities**. (Emphasis added.)

Such a mandate would not attract anyone in the private sector to such a major undertaking, if they were required to fulfill that obligation. There are some areas of this country, mainly rural, that would not be profitable or make good business sense to engage. There is a reason why some in the private sector use the Postal Service as the last mile for delivery. These companies would not otherwise turn a profit; thus, they would not deliver.

That is why it is so important that the Postal Service remain the public entity that it is. It literally belongs to the American people. It is still an essential service that binds our nation together. One need only look back a few years ago to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the American people relied on the Postal Service. It was as if America’s love affair with the Postal Service was rekindled after recent years of so many people openly questioning whether we were still relevant in this new digital age. Unfortunately, some of these people work for the Postal Service.

There are members of our union who don’t fully understand our history and the delicate nature of our very existence. That is why I chose to write this article to an audience of letter carriers, because I know that there are those among us who don’t take these threats seriously. They do not give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, or they voted in the most recent election against their best interest. As of this writing, we are preparing for our National Day of Action and hopefully the attacks on us will subside. We were warned of the possible risk to the Postal Service from a hostile administration and Congress, and this is what now confronts us. It would take legislative changes to legally alter our existence, but with the current makeup of Congress, it is possible.

If our rallies are successful, we will have energized the American people to join us and fight like hell for their Postal Service. Their response to our S.O.S. will not only save this essential American institution, but also our good government jobs.