

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEES:

READINESS

SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND

RISK MANAGEMENT

LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, AND POULTRY



Joe Courtney
Congress of the United States
2nd District, Connecticut

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

215 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

P (202) 225-2076

F (202) 225-4977

DISTRICT OFFICES:

101 WATER STREET, SUITE 301

NORWICH, CT 06360

P (860) 886-0139

F (860) 886-2974

77 HAZARD AVENUE, UNIT J

ENFIELD, CT 06082

P (860) 741-6011

F (860) 741-6036

Dear Mr. Brazee,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the United State Postal Service (USPS). I appreciate your comments and having the benefit of your views.

Over the past few years , mail volume has dropped considerably , resulting in continued operating losses. The USPS reported that mail volume in 2009 was down to 177.1 billion pieces , which is 12.7 percent below 2008 and 17.9 percent from the highest mail volume in 2006. Even after cutting 40,000 positions, overtime hours, and transportation costs , the USPS lost \$3.8 billion. It is clear that Congress must address the crisis facing the Postal Service and ensure that they have the tools they need to survive.

As you mention in your correspondence, on November 2, 2011 , Senator Joe Lieberman introduced the 21st Century Postal Service Act (S.1789). This legislation would make drastic changes to the USPS, by allowing the Postmaster General to use FERS overpayments to offer buyouts and retirement incentives to reduce the workforce by 100,000 employees. This legislation would also reduce benefits for retirement-age FECA beneficiaries and eliminate extra payments for FECA beneficiaries with dependants.

Additional, this legislation would require the USPS to consider post office consolidation, reducing the number of operating hours, and consider downsizing at sorting facilities instead of closure. As S.1789 is being considered in the Senate, I will not have the opportunity to vote on this measure unless is it brought up in the House for consideration.

While I find the current challenges before the USPS troubling, it is understandable why they will have to alter post routes to make do with dwindling employees and resources. The USPS is constantly adjusting their workforce and routes appropriately to match fluctuating mail volume. However, above all, I strongly believe that the USPS must make these difficult choices while maintaining the reliable service that people across our region and state rely on.

Similar to all businesses, USPS must have the flexibility to make adjustments to the meet the needs of the consumer and meet budget constraints. That is why I worked hard to pass adjustments to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits fund to make the USPS more solvent. I am an original cosponsor of a bill, H.R. 22, which would reduce the unnecessary high additions to the retirement fund while ensuring that health benefits for retirees are funded at a rate higher than that of any other industry.

There are many challenges ahead of our postal service, and I will continue to work with the USPS to balance needed reforms in meeting the fiscal worries with the need to serve the postal customers of our nations. Should you have any additional comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me in the future. For more information on my work in Congress, please visit my website at courtney.house.gov and sign up for my e-newsletter at [courtney.house.gov/forms/ emailsingup](http://courtney.house.gov/forms/emailsingup) . You can also connect with me at [facebook.com/ joecourtney](https://www.facebook.com/joecourtney) or receive updates from [twitter.com/ repjoecourtney](https://twitter.com/repjoecourtney) .

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress