

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.

In the last few years mail volume has considerably dropped , 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.

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.

Additionally, Representative Stephen Lynch of Massachusetts introduced the United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011 (H.R .1351 ) on April 4, 2011 . This legislation , which I am a cosponsor of, would require the Office of Personnel Management to conduct a study to determine whether the USPS has overpaid its pension obligations. Independent studies have found that USPS has overpaid over \$50 billion into the Civil Service Retirement System . If there is a surplus, the Office of Personnel Management will transfer the surplus to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund to help alleviate the financial burden of pre-funding future retiree health care benefits . This legislation was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, where it awaits further consideration.

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](http://courtney.house.gov) and sign up for my e-newsletter at [courtney.house.gov/forms/ emailsSignup](http://courtney.house.gov/forms/emailsSignup) . You can also connect with me at [facebook.com/ joecourtney](https://facebook.com/joecourtney) or receive updates from [twitter.com/ connecticutjoe](https://twitter.com/connecticutjoe) .

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY

Member of Congress