

**FIELD
HEARINGS
2016**

The Future of the U.S. Postal Service

**A REPORT FROM
A GRAND ALLIANCE TO SAVE
OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE**

BALTIMORE

SAN JOSE

NEW YORK

CLEVELAND

GREENSBORO

A GRAND ALLIANCE
TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

MISSION STATEMENT

The United States Postal Service is a wonderful national treasure, enshrined in the Constitution and supported by the American people.

Without any taxpayer funding, the USPS serves 150 million households and businesses each day, providing affordable, universal mail service to all - including rich and poor, rural and urban, without regard to age, nationality, race or gender.

The U.S. Postal Service belongs to "We, the People." But the USPS and postal jobs are threatened by narrow monied interests aimed at undermining postal services and dismantling this great public institution.

Even some postal executives have been complicit in the drive toward the destruction of the Postal Service and ultimate privatization: They have slowed mail service, closed community based Post Offices and mail processing facilities, slashed hours of operations, tried ceaselessly to end six-day service as well as door to door delivery, and eliminated hundreds of thousands of living wage jobs.

Good postal jobs are vital to strong, healthy communities, and have provided equal opportunities and the foundation for financial stability for workers from all walks of life, including racial and ethnic minorities, women and veterans. Postal services are essential to commerce and bind together families, friends and loved ones. In the day of e-commerce, a public postal service is as relevant as ever.

Yet those corporate forces who want to privatize public services allege that curtailing postal services and eliminating jobs are necessary due to diminishing mail volume and "burdensome" union wages and benefits. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In reality, a Congressionally-manufactured USPS "crisis" imposed an unfair crushing financial mandate on the Postal Service that no other government agency or private company is forced to bear. (The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 compels the USPS to pay approximately \$5.5 billion per year to fund future retiree healthcare costs 75 years in advance.) Without this unreasonable burden, the USPS would have enjoyed an operating surplus of \$600 million in 2013 and over \$1.4 Billion in 2014.

The people of this country deserve great public postal services. We advocate expanded services, such as non-profit postal banking and other financial services. We call on the Postmaster General and Postal Board of Governors to strengthen and champion the institution.

The public good must not be sacrificed for the sake of private investment and profit. A strong public Postal Service is our democratic right. Join us in the fight to protect and enhance vibrant public postal services now - and for many generations to come.

**Join National, State, and Local Organizations and Individuals
Fighting to Save Our Public Postal Service!**

A GRAND ALLIANCE
TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

PO Box 34273

Washington DC 20043

AGrandAlliance.org

Find us on Facebook and follow us @agrandalliance

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service conducted a series of field hearings to explore threats facing the U.S. Postal Service. These hearings, held in Baltimore, San Jose, New York, Cleveland, and Greensboro were opportunities to present and examine postal issues that are important to the public. These include the Postal Service's traditional role as the center of community, and threats including the Congressionally-created financial crisis, privatization, and further erosion of service. Participants also examined ways to strengthen and expand our public Postal Service, such as financial services and voting by mail. The results of the hearings reaffirmed the concerns and vision articulated by A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service.

About A Grand Alliance

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service came together to take a stand against unprecedented assaults on our public Postal Service. Founded on February 12, 2015, A Grand Alliance is a broad coalition of 141 national, state, and local organizations united in the belief that a strong public Postal Service is our democratic right. This was highlighted in a video featuring actor-activist Danny Glover, whose parents were both postal workers.

About the Field Hearings

Recent years have seen a bubbling up of awareness of the threats to our public Postal Service and of activism to fight it. Communities have been fighting outsourcing and privatization schemes as seen in the campaign to "Stop Staples," and to prevent closures of local post office and mail processing plants, cuts to service, and slowed mail. A Grand Alliance organized field hearings in five locations around the country to bring these issues to light and provide a forum for local community members to voice their observations, concerns, and recommendations.

The field hearings were organized by local labor and community leaders. They worked to involve local stakeholders at all levels - the organizing committee, the panel, and the invited speakers (a full list of panelists and speakers appears at the end of this report). While some people were identified and invited to testify in the planning stages, the events remained free and open to the public and the public were invited to testify. Many did.

The spirit in the hearings was one of *save & reform* the USPS. This sentiment reflected a general recognition that while much needed to be changed in the manner in which the USPS operates, first and foremost there must be a reaffirmation of the need for a **public postal system** and an adamant refusal to consider further privatization. Accompanying this, though, is an equally strong recognition that changes must be undertaken to bring the USPS fully into the 21st century, not just at the level of technology but in terms of responding to the current needs of our communities. What follows is a summary of the testimony divided into main themes. It is followed by brief conclusions and recommendations.

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service came together to take a stand against unprecedented assaults on our public Postal Service.

THE PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE: A NATIONAL TREASURE

The United States Postal Service is a wonderful national treasure. It is older than the country itself; Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster General in 1775. The power of Congress to “establish post offices and post roads” was written into the U.S. Constitution. Since its beginnings, the mail system has been crucial to ensuring the free flow of information and to securing democracy.

“We have said that there are certain assets that we as a people believe that we should own together, that we are going to invest in these assets because they fuel the greater good.”
— Elly Matsumura, Working Partnerships USA, at San Jose field hearing.

At the San Jose field hearing, Elly Matsumura of Working Partnerships USA described why it is important to keep the Postal Service public: “We have said that there are certain assets that we as a people believe that we should own together, that we are going to invest in these assets because they fuel the greater good.”

The Postal Service’s universal service obligation establishes its mission of providing affordable, universal mail service to all – including rich and poor, rural and urban, without regard to age, nationality, race, or gender. The U.S. Postal Service provides services at approximately 32,000 post offices across the country.¹ Services include First-Class Mail, Periodicals, Package services, Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express, Marketing mail, International mail, PO Box services, and Money Orders.^{2,3}

“Every American has the right to receive mail, and it’s the one way of communicating everyone has, that is affordable,” said John Patterson of Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)’s office at the Cleveland field hearing.

Today, Americans are using the U.S. Postal Service to receive prescription medicine, goods ordered online, local newspapers, catalogues, bills, and newsletters. A recent Gallup Poll found that Americans rate the Postal Service highest among 13 government agencies.⁴ Young people gave the Postal Service the highest rating: 81 percent of 18-29 year olds gave the USPS “excellent” or “good” marks.⁵

Good postal jobs have been and remain vital to strong, healthy communities, and provide equal opportunities and the foundation for financial stability for workers from all walks of life, including racial and ethnic minorities, women, and veterans. Dr. Philip Rubio, associate professor of history at North Carolina A&T University, testified in Greensboro on the history of the fight for equality in the Postal Service led by African-American postal workers. This fight has led to a much more diverse workforce in terms of race than the U.S. workforce at large.

1 <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/financials/10k-reports/fy2016.pdf>

2 Ibid.

3 <https://pe.usps.com/BusinessMail101/Index?ViewName=ClassesOfMail>

4 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/179519/americans-rate-postal-service-highest-major-agencies.aspx>

5 Ibid.

Stephen Pitts, associate chair of the U.C. Berkeley Labor Center, testified in San Jose that postal workers are not subjected to the wage inequality that exists in the rest of the state of California. Pitts expressed his concerns that eliminating good jobs at the Postal Service will increase inequalities. In Baltimore, Dr. Kenneth Morgan, assistant professor at Coppin State University, also testified on the importance of good jobs at the Postal Service. Dr. Morgan drew special attention to how these jobs helped establish financial stability for generations of African-American families.



San Jose Field Hearing

The Postal Service has the country's largest retail network and processes and delivers 47 percent of the world's mail.⁶ It is at the core of a \$1.4 trillion mailing industry that includes more than 600,000 jobs at the USPS and more than 7.5 million jobs in

the industry at large.⁷ If it were a private-sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 43rd in the Fortune 500, with revenue of \$71.5 billion in fiscal year 2016.^{8,9}

More than 113,000 Postal Service employees are military veterans.¹⁰ In Greensboro, a retired member of the American Postal Workers Union and veteran spoke about the positive impact of the Postal Service's hiring preference for veterans, especially wounded veterans.

While it is true that in recent years First Class Mail volume has declined, online shopping and e-commerce has caused an explosion in package volume. Recent studies by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the USPS Office of Inspector General indicate that the rate of decline of First-Class Mail volume has slowed in recent years.^{11,12} In fact, experts believe the decline in First Class Mail will end, and reach a new plateau.¹³ The same GAO report showed that households in rural areas continue to send cards

6 <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/welcome.htm>

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/financials/10k-reports/fy2016.pdf>

10 <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/welcome.htm>

11 <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-811>

12 USPS Office of Inspector General. Declines in U.S. Postal Service Mail Volume Vary Widely across the United States. Arlington, VA: USPS Office of Inspector General, 2015.

13 Ibid.

and letters at a similar, steady rate, regardless of whether that household has broadband access.¹⁴ Rural residents, especially, place a high value on the Postal Service.

Prescription drug spending in the United States reached a record high in 2015, and is expected to continue to rise through at least 2020.¹⁵ The second most commonly used method of receiving medications, in terms of overall spending, is by U.S. mail, and spending on mail order prescriptions has followed the trend of prescription spending overall.¹⁶



Steve Preminger, Moderator, San Jose Field Hearing

“For seniors who depend upon the mail to get needed medications and medical supplies, any cutback in service is truly frightening,”
— **Mariam Sammons of Visiting Neighbors, at the New York City field hearing.**

“For the past five years or so I have been using the mail order method to receive my medication, only having to walk to the end of my driveway to get my medication,” said John M. Jones, President of the Board of Directors of the Renaissance Community Co-op, at the Greensboro hearing.

“For seniors who depend upon the mail to get needed medications and medical supplies, any cutback in service is truly frightening,” said Mariam Sammons of Visiting Neighbors in New York City.

Only the Postal Service has the network, the infrastructure, and the resources to deliver to every home and every business across the country.

Federal Express, UPS, and other private couriers do not. In fact, the Postal Service delivers an average of 2.2 million packages for FedEx every day – approximately 30 percent of FedEx’s total U.S. ground volume.¹⁷ UPS does not reveal the amount of business that it does with the Postal Service, but every indication is that it is substantial. In a December 2014 test by Consumer Reports, the Postal Service outscored its two largest private-sector competitors in convenience and reliability and was less expensive 92 percent of the time for next-day and second-day delivery.¹⁸

¹⁴ <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-811>

¹⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-14/prescription-drug-spending-hits-record-425-billion-in-u-s>

¹⁶ Aitken, Murray, Michael Kleinrock, Jennifer Lyle, Deanna Nass and Laruen Caskey. *Medicines Use and Spending Shifts*. Parsippany, NJ: IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics, 2015.

¹⁷ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-mail-does-the-trick-for-fedex-ups-1407182247>

¹⁸ <https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/consumer-reports-ranks-postal-service-as-top-package-delivery-provider>

In San Jose, a local resident, Laura Wells, reflected this fact in her comments to the field hearing attendees. "I'd like to go into their offices with 49 cents and ask them what they could do for me," she remarked, referring to FedEx, UPS, and DHL. New York small business owner Julio Pabon testified that the services provided by the Postal Service are essential to managing his business, and the alternatives provided by the private shippers are simply not affordable.



Julio Pabon, small business owner, New York City Field Hearing

The Postal Service is committed to protecting the sanctity of the mail. More than 200 federal laws protect the U.S. mail, and postal workers are accountable to the public and have sworn an oath to secure the mail.¹⁹

It is perhaps most important to note that the Postal Service receives no tax dollars for its operations. The Postal Service is self-supporting; its revenue is generated through the sale of postage, products, and services.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for its operations. The Postal Service is self-supporting; its revenue is generated through the sale of postage, products, and services.

¹⁹ <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/welcome.htm>

THREATS TO OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE

“No other public or private entity is forced to pre-fund retiree health benefits in the way that USPS is,”
— Dr. Andrew Brod, senior research fellow at UNC-Greensboro’s Bryan School of Business and Economics, at the Greensboro field hearing.

“It’s a Congressionally-created crisis and only Congress can fix it,”
— Bill DeVore, legislative liaison at the National Association of Letter Carriers, at Cleveland Field Hearing.

Financial Health

At each of the field hearings around the country, A Grand Alliance brought together experts and community stakeholders to provide testimony about the financial health of the U.S. Postal Service. Headline after headline declares that the USPS is in deep financial trouble. Yet the USPS has largely recovered from the 2008 financial crisis. While the internet has resulted in a decline in First-Class Mail volume, it has also caused package delivery to skyrocket.²⁰

In New York, James Parrott, chief economist and deputy director at the Fiscal Policy Institute, testified that “the financial ‘trouble’ is almost entirely due to a provision of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.” It requires the Postal Service to fully pre-fund future retiree health benefits 75 years in advance over a 10-year period – at a cost of approximately \$5.5 billion per year²¹

“No other public or private entity is forced to pre-fund retiree health benefits in the way that USPS is,” according to Dr. Andrew Brod, senior research fellow at UNC-Greensboro’s Bryan School of Business and Economics.

If not for the PAEA pre-funding requirement, the Postal Service would have done quite well financially over the last few years. USPS now has four straight years of operating in the black, with a total operating profit of \$3.2 billion since 2013. As the economy recovers from the worst recession in 80 years, letter revenue is largely stabilizing. And the internet continues to drive online shopping, resulting in a rise in package revenue of 16 percent in fiscal year 2016.²²

The field hearings concluded that the USPS financial crisis is a manufactured one. “It’s a Congressionally-created crisis and only Congress can fix it,” testified Bill DeVore, legislative liaison at the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO at the Cleveland field hearing. DeVore was referring to the pre-funding mandate in the PAEA and noted that this “fix” will not cost taxpayers a dime.

Cuts in Service

The U.S. Postal Service responded to the 2008 financial crisis and to the pre-funding mandate imposed by Congress with significant cuts in service. As a result, mail service to the American people is suffering. One such cut is in the form of lowered service

²⁰ <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/decade-of-facts-and-figures.htm>) https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2015/rarc-wp-15-010_0.pdf

²¹ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/109/hr6407>

²² Based on its operations, it had a surplus of \$600 million in Fiscal Year 2013, \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2014 and \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2015. Operating profit for FY 2016 is \$610 million. And 2016 operating profit would have been \$1.6 billion if not for the first stamp price rollback since 1919.

standards – virtually eliminating overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals. This January 2015 change slowed mail delivery on all classes of mail throughout the country including medicine, online purchases, local newspapers, organizational bulletins, letters, bill payments, and invitations.

Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) testified at the Cleveland field hearing that the cuts in service standards in January 2015 “did not save money.” Kaptur introduced legislation to require the USPS to restore service standards to July 2012 levels.



Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Cleveland Field Hearing

A major focus of the field hearings was to shine a light on the impact of these cuts on postal customers. Right Reverend Efrén Garza, a nurse in San Jose, California, noted the many serious ramifications of delays in the delivery of mail, including late delivery of critical medications to patients. Miriam Samson of Visiting Neighbors and Doris Welch of Alliance for Retired Americans in New York both testified that cutbacks impact seniors more than most. In Baltimore, John Siebel, president of True Ballot, testified that delays in delivery due to service cuts hurt his company’s ability to run mail-ballot elections in the time frame mandated by various organizations’ constitutions.

In addition to the roll back of service standards, postal management closed or consolidated 150 mail processing facilities between 2012 and 2015. Public pressure and the failure of the cuts to save money resulted in a USPS moratorium on closing 70 additional facilities. In addition, the USPS is not providing door delivery to most new housing developments. Rather, residents must use a centrally-located cluster box. Field hearing participants spoke often about the great benefit to seniors and disabled persons of having a letter carrier come to their door each day. Furthermore, cuts in personnel, largely through attrition, have resulted in chronic understaffing which frustrates customers.

Keep the Postal Service Public

“The Postal Service’s plans for further consolidation are not the result of postal operations losing money. Rather it stems from an effort by some Washington officials seeking to privatize the post office,” said James Parrott, chief economist and deputy director of the Fiscal Policy Institute at the New York field hearing.

“The Postal Service’s plans for further consolidation are not the result of postal operations losing money. Rather it stems from an effort by some Washington officials seeking to privatize the post office,”
— James Parrott, chief economist and deputy director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, at the New York Field Hearing.

“So the idea of privatization goes against the very purpose of the United States post office which is to deliver postal services,” Rep. Dr. Alma S. Adams, (D-NC), at Greensboro field hearing.

Much of the mail is already processed in private “pre-sort houses” that employ low-wage workers. Pitney Bowes has the “largest pre-sort network” in the country and stands to make substantial profits from a more privatized Postal Service. Pitney Bowes and the National Academy of Public Administration have called for the privatization of all retail and mail sorting operations.²³

In 2013, the Postal Service entered a secretive, no-bid deal to offer postal services at Staples stores, using low-wage Staples employees, rather than USPS employees. The USPS hopes to expand this model to other retailers. An internal USPS document reveals that the goal of the Staples deal was to replace living-wage U.S. Postal Service jobs with low-wage, non-union jobs at Staples and other national retailers.²⁴ The plan included opening postal counters at more than 1,500 stores throughout the country.²⁵

Our public Postal Service operates with a universal service obligation to every household in the country – rich and poor, rural and urban, without regard to age, nationality, race, or gender. The USPS cannot walk away from unprofitable neighborhoods. Before the USPS can make significant changes to service, it must notify the citizenry and allow the people to offer input.

Private businesses like Staples have no such responsibility. They have just one obligation: to maximize profit for their shareholders. Since 2014, Staples has closed at least 300 stores with no notice and no input.²⁶

“So the idea of privatization goes against the very purpose of the United States post office which is to deliver postal services,” declared Rep. Dr. Alma S. Adams, (D-NC) at the Greensboro field hearing.

Many on Wall Street and in Congress seem to be eager to dismantle the Postal Service. “The private sector businesses will want to cherry pick,” testified Mary Pat Clarke, who serves on the Baltimore City Council, at the Baltimore field hearing. In fact, a report from the Brookings Institution²⁷ calls for spinning



Rep. Dr. Alma S. Adams, (D-NC) at the Greensboro Field Hearing

Many on Wall Street and in Congress seem to be eager to dismantle the Postal Service. “The private sector businesses will want to cherry pick,” Mary Pat Clarke, Baltimore City Council, at the Baltimore field hearing.

23 <http://www.napawash.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Hybrid-Public-Private-Postal-Service-1-2-13-3.pdf>
24 <http://www.apwu.org/news/web-news-article/stinging-rebuke-nlr-rules-usps-staples-deal-violated-federal-law>
25 <http://www.apwu.org/issues/stop-staples>
26 <http://www.twice.com/news/retail/store-closings-continue-staples/60679>
27 <https://www.brookings.edu/research/delaying-the-inevitable-political-stalemate-and-the-u-s-postal-service/>

off the Postal Service's revenue-generating parcel business into the private sector. The report relied on research funded in part by United Parcel Service (UPS), the private-sector company that would benefit most if the Postal Service were split up.²⁸



Patricia Watson, AFSCME Council 3 and small business owner, speaks while hearing officers listen, Baltimore Field Hearing

Recent cuts in service undermine the mission of the U.S. Postal Service. They also undermine confidence in and support for the USPS, increasing the danger of privatization. "In all other sectors, privatization cuts corners by cutting services, cutting jobs, lowering wages, etc.," reported Jeremy Mohler of In the Public Interest, an organization that studies privatization of public services, at the New York field hearing.

This is seen in privatized postal systems around the world. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Post Office was split from the profitable Royal Mail business to pave the way for privatization. In a privatized Royal Mail, 11,000 jobs have been cut, a fifth of its mail centers have closed, and 5 percent of its delivery offices have shut down.²⁹

Typically, with privatization "you get higher costs, worse services, less efficient services, or no services," according to Mark Cassell, professor of political science and public policy at Kent State University at the Cleveland field hearing.

For example, allowing competition would lead to rural post offices closing and the private sector would not fill the void - just as they don't fill the banking void in inner cities, testified Andrew Brod in Greensboro. Furthermore, according to professor Steven Pitts, "any layoffs would have disproportionately adverse effects on the non-White population."

Typically, with privatization "you get higher costs, worse services, less efficient services, or no services,"
— Mark Cassell, professor, at the Cleveland field hearing.

²⁸ <http://www.epi.org/blog/brookings-paper-on-the-postal-service-gets-the-facts-wrong/>

²⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/clive-lewis/royal-mail-sale_b_12500394.html

EXPANSION OF SERVICE

The field hearings also focused on strengthening the USPS by using its vast infrastructure to offer additional services. To thrive in the digital age, when people expect to receive information and deliveries quickly, the Postal Service must enhance and expand service.

Although the USPS has begun to adapt within its existing constraints, much more can be done. For example, the USPS could offer licensing, notary, copy and scanning services, access to high-speed internet service, and longer hours and additional staff at neighborhood post offices. Solar panels and green roofs can generate and save energy. And neighborhood post offices could provide electric car charging stations.

One of the topics that drew broad support and excitement at the field hearings is postal banking. Attendees heard from experts and advocates about the need for affordable financial services and how the USPS might fill the current void. Nearly 28 percent of U.S. households (or 100 million people) do not have access to affordable financial services.³⁰ A shocking 49 percent of African-American and 46 percent of Latino households are underserved.³¹ For many, traditional banks are out of reach either geographically (bank deserts exist in both rural and urban areas), or due to high fees and other obstacles to opening, maintaining, and accessing accounts.

In New York City, “There are seven zip codes... where there is not one bank branch serving the community,” according to Sarah Ludwig, founder and co-director of the New Economy Project. In Cleveland, Vi Diamond of the Campaign for Postal Banking testified that 18.6 percent of households in Cleveland do not have a checking or savings account and 24.1 percent are underbanked, disproportionately impacting communities of color.

A growing industry has flooded these communities with products, services, and practices that are expensive and often predatory, trapping many in a cycle of debt. Payday loans, for example, have typical interest rates of 391 percent. There are approximately 22,000 payday loan stores in this country - that’s more than Wal-Mart and Starbucks combined.

Each year, the average underserved household spends \$2,412 - nearly 10 percent of gross income - in fees and interest for non-bank financial services.³² These transactions might include a payday or car title loan, cashing a paycheck, or simply accessing Social

³⁰ <https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2015/2015report.pdf>

³¹ Ibid.

³² <https://www.kpmg.com/US/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/serving-underserved-market.pdf> and <http://www.cfsinnovation.com/Document-Library/2012-Financially-Underserved-Market-Size-Study.aspx>

In New York City,
“There are seven
zip codes... where
there is not one bank
branch serving the
community,”
— Sarah Ludwig,
founder and co-
director of the New
Economy Project,
New York City
field hearing.

Security benefits. The underserved “are outside the margins of traditional banking. They pay the price with every paycheck they cash, with every payday loan they take out and every fee they pay to access their own money,” testified Michael Young, of United for a Fair Economy, in Greensboro.

The USPS is in a unique position to provide basic, affordable, consumer-driven financial services via its existing infrastructure. The USPS is a trusted, accessible, and secure government agency (that receives no tax dollars for operating expenses) with the world’s largest retail network (32,000 branches serving every urban, suburban, and rural community in the country). Non-profit financial services provided by the USPS could help struggling people nationwide achieve financial stability – and strengthen the USPS mission to serve the public.

Postal systems around the world – including France, Italy, Japan, China, Brazil, India, and New Zealand – offer financial services. And the United States has a tradition of postal banking as well. At the Cleveland field hearing, Greg Coleridge testified about the postal savings system that existed in the United States from 1911 to 1967. The USPS continues to offer domestic and international money orders as well as international wire transfers.³³

Under existing authority, the USPS could expand and enhance its current financial services to include payroll check cashing, ATMs, bill paying, and electronic transfers. Providing affordable, accessible financial services would fulfill a great need, promote a non-profit alternative to the big banks that serve Wall Street, as well as strengthen the Postal Service.

A Grand Alliance also heard testimony about voting by mail. Three states – Washington, Oregon, and Colorado – conduct all voting by mail. Voting by mail has numerous advantages for our democracy: it increases voter turnout, deters voter fraud and voter suppression, eliminates long lines and missed hours of work, and it saves money.

“Increasing the access to voting by mail will help break down barriers to voting and increase participation in one of the most fundamental democratic processes in this country,” testified Pastor Jethro Moore, II, president of the San Jose/Silicon Valley Branch of the NAACP.

The USPS is in a unique position to provide basic, affordable, consumer-driven financial services via its existing infrastructure.

“Increasing the access to voting by mail will help break down barriers to voting and increase participation in one of the most fundamental democratic processes in this country.”
— Pastor Jethro Moore, II, president of the San Jose/Silicon Valley Branch of the NAACP, San Jose field hearing.

33 https://www.uspsaig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2015/rarc-wp-15-011_0.pdf

THE WAY FORWARD: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our public Postal Service is a national treasure. During the field hearings across the country A Grand Alliance heard from postal patrons from many walks of life that recent cuts in service are impacting their businesses and their way of life. It is also clear that Americans care deeply about the future of the U.S. Postal Service. The Postal Service is vital to our democracy and must continue for generations to come.

A series of bad decisions have hampered the USPS's ability to thrive. A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is calling for:

- Commitment to keeping the Postal Service public by eliminating outsourcing and other efforts to privatize the service.
- Repeal of the retiree health benefits pre-funding requirement.
- Protection of six-day and door-to-door delivery.
- Permanent moratorium on plant closings and consolidations.
- Restoration of service standards to July 2012 levels.
- No further post office closings and opening of suspended post offices.
- Appointment of a Postal Board of Governors that supports a strong, public Postal service.
- Expanded services for a vibrant 21st century Postal Service.

The Postal Service
is vital to our
democracy and
must continue for
generations
to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND HEARING PARTICIPANTS

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service wishes to thank each organization and individual who contributed time, energy, and expertise to make the field hearings a success.

List of hearings and participants:

Baltimore Field Hearing

March 23, 2016

Hearing Officers:

Mary Pat Clarke, Baltimore City Council member

Dr. Marvin Cheatham, Sr.

Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr.

Moderator:

Bill Fletcher, Jr.

Presenters:

John Siebel, election expert and president of the Maryland-based True Ballot

Elizabeth Embry, attorney

Dr. Kenneth Morgan, Assistant Professor/Coordinator of the Urban Studies Program, Coppin State University

Jim Baldrige, the MD/DC President of the Alliance for Retired Americans

Patricia Watson, of AFSCME Council 3 and owner of Pawfect Compliment

Sharon Black, community organizer with the Baltimore People's Power Assembly

San Jose Field Hearing

April 21, 2016

Hearing Officers:

Carmen Montano, Vice-Mayor, City of Milpitas

Cindy Chavez, Supervisor, County of Santa Clara, Second District

Paul Fong, Former State Assembly member, Professor of Political Science

Moderator:

Steve Preminger

Presenters:

The Right Reverend Efren Garza, RN, Old Catholic Diocese Maria Madre De Dios

Elly Matsumura, Deputy Director, Working Partnerships, USA

Pastor Jethroe Moore, President, NAACP / San Jose Chapter

Dr. Steven C. Pitts, Associate Director, UC Berkeley Labor Center

Liana Molina, Director of Community Engagement, California Reinvestment Coalition

New York Field Hearing

May 12, 2016

Hearing Officers:

Minister Deirdre Fisher-Kemp, New Light Baptist Church

Michelle Holder, Assistant Professor of Economics, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

Norman Siegel, Civil rights and civil liberties attorney, Former director of New York Civil Liberties Union

Moderator:

Nellie Bailey

Presenters:

Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

James Parrott, Chief Economist and Deputy Director of the Fiscal Policy Institute

Mariam Sammons, Visiting Neighbors

Sarah Ludwig, founder and co-director of the New Economy Project

Julio Pabón, Bronx businessman and community activist

Jeremy Mohler, Communications Specialist at In the Public Interest

Bernadette Evangelist, Big Apple Coffee Party

Cleveland Field Hearing

June 28, 2016

Hearing Officers:

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Congresswoman, Ohio's Ninth Congressional District

William Burrus, Local & Retiree member, National APWU President Emeritus, Author

Rev. Dr. Todd Davidson, Pastor Antioch Baptist Church

Earl Pike, Writer, Scientist, Wadsworth Award Winner, former Exec. Dir. AIDS Taskforce

Dr. Edith Rasell, Ntl. UCC, Min. for Economic Justice, formerly with Economic Policy Inst.

Moderator:

Joyce Goldstein, Esq., Goldstein, Gragel, LLC.

Presenters:

Bill DeVore, NALC Legislative Liaison

Michael Nelson, President Cleveland NAACP

Greg Coleridge, AFSC Director, Move to Amend Ohio Coordinator

Mark Cassell, Kent State Professor of Political Science and Public Policy

Chip Bromley, Organize Ohio, Fair Lending Director

Violetta Diamond, Campaign for Postal Banking

Deb Klein, Jobs with Justice

John Patterson, staff, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown

Greensboro Field Hearing

June 29, 2016

Hearing Officers:

Fred Erwin, Greensboro, NC Firefighter

Viola Fuller, First Vice President, Greensboro NAACP

Sharon Hightower, Greensboro City Council Member

Larry Morse, Retired NC A&T University Economics Professor

Moderator:

Dr. T. Anthony Spearman, Pastor at St. Philip's AME Zion Church

Presenters:

John Swaine, CEO, International Civil Rights Center and Museum

Dr. Alma S. Adams is the U.S. Congresswoman for North Carolina's 12th District.

Dr. Andrew Brod, Senior Research Fellow at UNC-Greensboro's Bryan School of Business and Economics

Michael Young of United for a Fair Economy (UFE)

John M. Jones, President of the Board of Directors of Renaissance Community Co-op

Dr. Philip Rubio, associate professor of history at North Carolina A&T State University.

Richard Koritz, Solidarity Organizer, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO



A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service National Signatories

A. Philip Randolph Institute
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Democracy
Alliance for Retired Americans
Amalgamated Transit Union
American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of State, County and
Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Postal Workers Union and Auxiliary
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Black Women's Roundtable
Catholic Labor Network
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Center for Community Change Action
Center for Effective Government
Center for Media and Democracy
Center for Rural Affairs
Center for Study of Responsive Law
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Color of Change
CommonSpark
Communications Workers of America
Communities and Postal Workers United
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
Consumer Action
Democracy for America
Essential Information
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Aid
Farm Labor Organizing Committee
Gamaliel Network
Greenpeace USA
Healthcare-NOW!
Hightower Lowdown
In the Public Interest
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Association of Fire Fighters
Jewish Labor Committee
Jobs With Justice
Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Ms. Foundation for Women
National Action Network
NAACP
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
Association
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of Postal Supervisors
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Consumers League
National Council of Churches
National Education Association
National Farmers Union
National Nurses United
National Organization for Women
National Postal Mail Handlers Union
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association
New Progressive Alliance
9to5
People Demanding Action
People for the American Way
People's Action
Popular Resistance
Pride at Work
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Public Citizen
Railroad Workers United
Rainbow PUSH Coalition
Service Employees International Union
Sierra Club
Social Security Works
United For A Fair Economy
United Students Against Sweatshops
VoteVets Action Fund
Working America

All national and local signatories are listed at agrandalliance.org.

A GRAND ALLIANCE
TO SAVE OUR PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE