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**Hawaii Attorney General Joins Suit to Stop
Undermining of U.S. Postal Service and November Presidential Election**

HONOLULU – Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined a coalition of states and cities in filing a lawsuit to stop the disruption of operations at the United States Postal Service (USPS) and to prevent adverse impacts on the November presidential election [<https://ag.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/doc-1-complaint.pdf>]. The suit — filed against President Donald Trump, the USPS, and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy — comes a day after the postmaster general testified before Congress and refused to reverse policies that have slowed mail operations across the nation. In recent weeks, the USPS has scaled back operations that would significantly undermine the USPS’s ability to handle what is expected to be a record number of mail-in ballots this November because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The slowdown already has had life-threatening impacts on veterans and seniors who rely on the USPS for medication, as well as economic impacts from individuals waiting for their pensions and paychecks.

“The policies implemented by the United States Postal Service violate that institution’s own statutes and illegally impact our citizens’ right to vote,” said Attorney General Connors. “This lawsuit seeks to protect the heart of our democracy the ability to vote. It also seeks to support our USPS workers, who serve a critical function recognized in our Constitution.”

The U.S. federal mail system has been a critical part of American infrastructure since before the United States declared its independence. For more than 200 years, the federal postal service has provided reliable, vital services to millions of Americans, and, for the last 50 years, the USPS has acted as an independent agency — severed from the president’s cabinet — in an effort to ensure its political independence. But, earlier this year — in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic — a new postmaster general was appointed, who immediately led an “operational pivot” to overhaul how the USPS collects, processes, and delivers mail throughout the country.

In today’s lawsuit — filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and led by New York Attorney General Letitia James — the coalition of three states and two cities

argues that significant and recent changes to USPS operations under DeJoy's leadership have substantially delayed USPS mail across the country. These include removing mailboxes and mail sorting machines, curtailing overtime for USPS staff, prohibiting late and extra trips that ensure mail is delivered on a timely and consistent basis, institutionalizing other policies that cause further delays, and creating confusion regarding what election mail standards the USPS will follow in advance of the November general election. The suit further alleges that changes in USPS operations are in line with President Donald Trump's repeated and public statements in opposition to mail-in voting and his intent to impair the delivery of mailed ballots by cutting off the resources needed for the USPS to operate because mailed ballots would specifically harm Republicans' abilities to win elections, even going so far as to make clear last month in a tweet that "Republicans, in particular, cannot let this happen!"

These changes reflect a significant departure from USPS service standards, fail to adhere to USPS's statutory obligations, and fail to recognize USPS's historic and critical role in America's infrastructure. Further disconcerting is the fact that these changes come at a time when New York and the rest of the country — due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic — are relying on mail more than ever to deliver timely and critical services, including medication and other items, legal notices, and, crucially, election mail, as Americans near the November general election.

The USPS is an essential part of the U.S. economy, providing vital services at levels that no other delivery system comes close to providing, including:

- Nearly 120 million Veterans Affairs prescriptions are sent annually by mail;
- 20 percent of adults over the age of 40 who take medication for a chronic condition receive prescriptions by mail, and more than half of the people who receive medication by mail are over the age of 65;
- 18 percent of Americans pay their bills via the mail, including 40 percent of seniors;
- Nearly one in five Americans receive their tax refund through the mail;
- Approximately 40 percent of small businesses send packages through the USPS monthly; and
- More than 42 million ballots were mailed to Americans in the 2018 midterms, and 80 percent of overseas members of armed services who voted did so by mail in 2018.

The USPS's recent changes will have a significant impact on all Americans. The USPS currently delivers 48 percent of the world's mail, and in fiscal year 2019, delivered 143 billion pieces of mail to 160 million delivery addresses. In 2019, Hawaii adopted an election system of almost universal voting by mail when it enacted Act 136. Therefore, any threatened delays to mail delivery also threaten to undermine Hawaii's election system. Other states are likely to experience significant increases in the use of vote by mail or absentee ballots, partly due to the risk of COVID-19 infections. Limiting these vote by mail options may result in voters further risking their health by voting in-person during an unprecedented pandemic.

The USPS is currently capable of delivering ballots to any American who requests one. In fact, just last week, the USPS publicly stated that even if all 330+ million Americans in the country requested some form of a vote by mail ballot, that would only account for 75 percent of a single day's mail delivery, which typically tops 470 million pieces of mail each day. But efforts to drastically alter USPS's operations could severely undermine the USPS's ability to fulfill these requests.

The coalition specifically argues that efforts to undermine both the USPS and the November elections are in violation of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, the Postal Reorganization Act, and the Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The coalition asks the court to vacate all the recent changes made by USPS and halt the USPS from further implementing the changes on the grounds that they violate statutory and constitutional law.

Joining Attorney General Connors and Attorney General James in filing today's lawsuit is the attorney general of New Jersey, as well as the city of New York, NY and the city and county of San Francisco, CA.

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