

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Joins Colleagues in Washington to 'Save U.S. Postal Service and Right to Vote From Trump Administration Assaults'

Government / **Published On August 24, 2020 06:11 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **August 24, 2020**



Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett is back in Washington D.C. to join her colleagues in what her office described as "saving the U.S. Postal Service and the right to vote from the Trump administration's assaults."

"The Delivering for America Act requires the Postal Service to return to the Postal Service operations and levels of service that were in place on January 1, 2020 throughout the duration of the coronavirus public health emergency and requires all election mail to be treated as First-Class mail," Ms. Plaskett said in a statement. "It also

provides \$25 billion in critical funding for the Postal Service – the same level of funding recommended by the USPS Board of Governors, which is composed of 100 percent President Trump appointees."

The U.S. House of Representatives, led by Democrats, on Saturday passed legislation preventing cutbacks at the U.S. Postal Service at least through January. The measure also provides \$25 billion to the USPS in additional funding, coming a result of Democrats' concerns that delivery delays affecting regular mail could spill over into an election being held during a pandemic.

"The passing of this legislation comes at the same time as newly uncovered internal Postal Service documents warning Postmaster General DeJoy about steep declines and increasing delays nationwide over the last two months, delays that are far worse than originally believed," Ms. Plaskett said. "Yet despite the urgent need for action, Congressional Republicans and the Trump Administration have repeatedly claimed that there are 'no delays' with the mail and 'no data,' suggesting the delays are no more than 'conspiracy theories.' The Postal Service is essential to the fabric of our communities, providing Virgin Island families and all Americans with critical services, including the delivery of life-saving prescriptions, Social Security benefits, paychecks, tax returns and ballots."

The bill passed 257-150 after being brought to the floor by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. It won the support of 231 Democrats and 26 Republicans. Approximately 149 Republicans and one Independent opposed the measure. According to the Wall Street Journal, Ms. Pelosi brought the measure to the floor over the objections of House Republican leaders who contended she was promoting conspiracy theories that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a major Trump donor appointed to the position in May, is cutting costs at the financially struggling service to hinder voting by mail, which President Trump has criticized.

In her release, Ms. Plaskett said, "Trump Administration and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy have waged an outrageous campaign to degrade postal operations and delay mail delivery in the middle of a pandemic and just months before a Presidential election, threatening to sabotage the election and disenfranchise countless voters. While the committed activism of Democrats and the American people forced the Postmaster General into announcing a so-called 'pause,' it is a wholly insufficient step that does not reverse damage already wrecked. The Postmaster General even admitted that he has no intention of replacing the sorting machines, blue mailboxes and other key mail infrastructure that have been removed and that plans for overtime, which are critical for the timely delivery of mail, are not in the works. Therefore, in the name of our democracy and the Virgin Island veterans, seniors, families and small businesses who depend on the Post Office, I proudly joined my colleagues to support the Delivering for America Act to undo the damage and ensure the Postal Service has the resources necessary to fulfill its vital role at this pivotal moment."

The Delivering for America Act would prohibit:

- Any change that would generally affect service on a nationwide or substantially nationwide basis
- Any revision of existing service standards
- Closing, consolidating or reducing the hours of any post office or postal facility
- Any prohibition on paying overtime to Postal Service officers or employees
- Any change that would prevent the Postal Service from meeting its service standards or cause a decline in measurements of performance relative to those standards
- Any change that would have the effect of delaying mail or increasing the volume of undelivered mail

This legislation would also:

- Include \$25 billion requested by the Postal Service and supported unanimously and on a bipartisan basis by the Trump-appointed Postal Board of Governors
- Require the Postal Service to treat all official election mail as First-Class mail
- Prohibit the removal, decommissioning or other stoppage of mail sorting machines, other than for routine maintenance
- Prohibit the removal of mailboxes
- Explicitly reverse any changes already implemented to the operations or policies of the Postal Service that delay mail delivery.

On Monday, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, which Ms. Plaskett is a member of, will hold an urgent hearing with Postmaster General DeJoy to answer questions on USPS concerns.

"I stand with my fellow Democrats and fellow Americans in the Virgin Islands and across the country to oppose the Administration's dangerous attacks on the Postal Service, which threatens the lives and livelihoods of Virgin Island families and the life of our American Democracy. I will continue fighting to address," said the delegate to Congress. "The damage done to the Postal Service and ensure that every American can freely exercise their sacred right to vote in a safe and healthy way."