

Trump declares intent to privatize US Postal Service

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President-elect Donald Trump intends to privatize the United States Postal Service, the *Washington Post* reported in an article over the weekend.

According to the *Post*, Trump has had several discussions in recent weeks on privatizing USPS. Trump spoke with Howard Lutnick, his pick for commerce secretary and the co-chair of his presidential transition team at Mar-a-Lago on the issue. He also held a meeting of transition officials to solicit ideas on privatizing the USPS last month.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, sources told the newspaper that Trump said the government should not subsidize the Postal Service when he was informed of its financial losses this year.

The move to hive out USPS, which currently operates as an independent government agency, would represent a massive assault on the working class. Roughly 500,000 currently work at USPS, whose existence is prescribed by the US Constitution and which is mandated to provide universal services to all Americans, regardless of how remote their location.

The working class must mobilize to oppose this, with a mass movement to save the post office as part of a broader defense of jobs which are being slashed in every industry. This can only be organized independently of the trade union bureaucrats, who are already actively helping to carry out a restructuring program designed to pave the way to privatize USPS.

This must also be a global campaign. Significantly, the *Post* ran the story as the government in Canada moved to shut down a month-long strike by 50,000 Canada Post workers. Other corporate attacks are being carried out against postal workers in Britain and Germany, where the post offices are already privatized, and around the world.

The key strategic question is the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, which already has active postal worker committees in the US, Canada, Britain, Germany and Australia. The global power of the working class must be leveraged independently of all big business parties, connecting the fight to defend postal services with a rebellion to transfer power from pro-corporate union bureaucrats to workers as part of a fight against capitalist inequality.

Whatever illusions exist in Trump among workers, to whom opposition to the status quo defaulted in the election thanks to the

open indifference of the Democrats, are quickly being shattered. Trump, who has declared he plans to run as a dictator from “day one,” is planning massive, historic attacks on the working class.

The plan to privatize USPS also exposes Trump’s right-wing populist statements only a few days before, where he attempted to blame automation in US ports on “foreign” companies. This “America First” hot air, which was endorsed by officials from the Teamsters and the International Longshoremen’s Association, is aimed at deflecting blame from oligarchs in the US, including Trump himself and his major ally Elon Musk for job cuts.

Trump has appointed Musk head of the so-called “Department of Government Efficiency,” and the latter has said he plans to cut \$2 trillion per year from the federal budget. This has won Trump the support of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who owns the *Washington Post*, and from Wall Street in general. Major stock indexes are on the rise as the ruling elite salivates over the money to be made under Trump.

Privatizing USPS a decades-long goal

Privatizing the post office has been a priority for both parties for decades, stretching back all the way to an initial attempt by Richard Nixon, which was defeated by a massive wildcat postal strike in 1970.

In 2018, the Trump White House produced the “Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century,” a government reorganization plan which proposed transforming the Postal Service into a private entity.

Also in 2018, Trump issued an executive order establishing the Task Force on the United States Postal System to evaluate the USPS’s financial issues and recommend reforms.

The task force’s report, released in December 2018, recommended significant structural changes, including: reducing delivery frequency, allowing USPS to increase prices for commercial and package deliveries, and revisiting union contracts to cut labor costs.

The Postal Service has served as one of Amazon’s “last mile” couriers since 2013. Amazon has been able to leverage USPS’s universal service obligation (USO), which requires it to deliver mail to every address in the United States, regardless of

geographic location, for next to nothing to build its logistics empire.

The latest offensive against USPS has come in the form of the 10-year “Delivering for America” restructuring program. It is spearheaded by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a major financial contributor to Trump. The plan involves tens of thousands of lost jobs, the closure of a thousand local post offices and concentrating the remaining network around a smaller number of automated hub facilities.

Career postal jobs are being cut through attrition, forcing workers out via massive wage theft against rural carriers under the new Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System, and through invasive surveillance technologies such as TIAREAP.

Since 2021, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has raised postage rates five times and it has extended the delivery window for most First-Class Mail and Periodicals from a one-to-three-day service standard to a one-to-five-day window.

DeJoy outlines progress on Delivering for America to the Senate

Speaking before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) at the beginning of December, DeJoy reported that USPS lost \$9.5 billion in fiscal year 2024. That is up from last year when the agency lost \$6.5 billion.

Despite increasing year-over-year revenue and successfully reducing “controllable expenses,” such as shifting delivery from air to ground networks and reducing the use of third party vendors, DeJoy attributed 80 percent of these losses to fixed costs, such as mandatory pension contributions for retirees and workers’ compensation claims for injured employees.

Currently, 63 percent of rural post offices cost more to run than the money they bring in, compared to only 7 percent of urban post offices that are unable to cover their costs. DeJoy has sought to recoup some of the costs of rural delivery by cutting mail pick up from rural post offices from twice a day to once a day.

The proposal, known as regional transportation optimization (RTO) has been met with theatrical outrage from lawmakers whose constituents live in rural areas. During the recent hearing, Republican senator from Missouri Josh Hawley vowed to “protect” rural mail service and proclaimed, “I’m going to do everything I can to kill it [RTO]...I’ll go down with the ship, but I’m going to do everything I can to kill it.”

This is hot air. Hawley, a fascist and major co-conspirator in the events of January 6, is a top ally of Trump. Within the Republican Party, however, his role has been to promote greater ties with the trade union bureaucracy, publicly justified with empty populist demagoguery. He played a major role in talks with the Teamsters union, which de-facto backed Trump by refusing to endorse a candidate in November.

The first three years of the Delivering for America (DFA) rollout included transitioning operations in Richmond, Virginia and

Atlanta, Georgia to RPDCs in 2023. Both implementations were operational and logistical debacles that drew the attention of the media.

Throughout the HSGAC proceedings, senators paid lip service to constituents’ concerns about declining mail service and the impact of DFA on their districts. Meanwhile, they laid out some of the arguments that will fuel the drive towards privatization in Trump’s next term.

In particular, senators called attention to USPS’ supposedly untenable labor costs. Ranking member Rand Paul, Republican senator from Kentucky called for casualization of USPS or a two-tier structure of pay, benefits, and working conditions, “[I]f labor is 80 percent of your cost, you have to do something about your labor cost, either outsource it or what you need to do is provide a different alternative through pension or through healthcare.”

DeJoy, in turn, blamed Congress for restrictions that prevent him from making the necessary changes to cut costs. “[I]f I move a collection box time on a blue box, I have the rage of Congress bearing down on me...At the end of the day, we have requirements to have about 20 percent of our workforce be pre-career, 80 percent of our workforce career.”

When asked by Senator Roger Marshall, Republican from Kansas, to address resistance to change of the USPS, DeJoy significantly responded: “[I]t would have been easier for me to build a new Postal Service than to transition this one... [W]e have a postal regulatory organization that doesn’t understand modern day logistics and productivity and aggregation. We have significant unfunded mandates that are given upon us by this Congress.” In other words, legislation is required, which is no doubt already being prepared, to remove mandates establishing service levels and limiting the use of part-time employment.

The hearing underscores widespread support in the ruling class for the privatization of USPS. Opposition can get nowhere by appealing to the power that be to “listen” to “their constituents.” Rather, the working class must mobilize independently of the entire political setup, in a broader fight against inequality and the move towards dictatorship.



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