

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 2024

Ms. Tammy Hull
Inspector General
United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Inspector General Hull,

We write to request the United States Postal Service (USPS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) expand its audit of the new Atlanta Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC) in Palmetto, GA.

Thank you for your ongoing work to conduct oversight of the USPS's implementation of its "Delivering for America" plan. On March 11, 2024, USPS OIG began an audit to evaluate the effectiveness and operations of the new Atlanta RPDC. We were glad to see this announcement and respectfully request that any final USPS OIG audit report include an analysis of whether these operational changes will disproportionately affect or further disadvantage Georgia's rural, low-income, and underserved communities, as well as Georgia's historically-disadvantaged communities and communities of color.

As you know, on February 24, 2024, USPS began operating the new Atlanta RPDC in Palmetto, GA, as part of its "Delivering for America" plan, which outlines USPS's plan to change its processing and delivery network.¹ Although USPS intended for these changes to streamline its operations, we are concerned these actions will negatively affect USPS's service performance. Unfortunately, as evidenced by recent reporting from 11 Alive, WSBTV, and Fox 5 Atlanta, Georgians throughout the state have already begun to feel the disruptive effects of these network changes.²

Americans rely on USPS to connect our communities and deliver everything from essential medication to important tax documents and ballots. Without access to secure, accessible, and efficient postal services, we are concerned that Americans will struggle to meet their everyday needs. We are particularly concerned that USPS's consolidation efforts will disproportionately

¹ *New Atlanta GA Regional Processing & Distribution Center Goes Live February 24, 2024*, United States Postal Service (Jan. 26, 2024), <https://postalpro.usps.com/mnt/glusterfs/2024-01/New%20Atlanta%20GA%20Regional%20Processing%20and%20Distribution%20Center%20Goes%20Live%20February.24.2024.pdf>; *Delivering For America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Stability and Service Excellence*, United States Postal Service (Mar. 23, 2021), https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/delivering-for-america/assets/USPS_Delivering-For-America.pdf.

² Tyisha Fernandes, *Metro Atlanta Postal Center Built to Make Things Easier Could Be to Blame for Major Delays*, WSBTV (Mar. 13, 2024), <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/south-fulton-county/metro-atlanta-postal-center-built-make-things-easier-could-be-blame-major-delays/BL73LCMKTZE7HHWMTLLK23343U>; Aungelique Proctor, *USPS Delays Impacting Customers in Metro Atlanta*, Fox 5 Atlanta (Mar. 12, 2024), <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/usps-delays-impacting-customers-in-metro-atlanta>; Molly Oak, *'It Affects People's Lives': Metro Atlanta Residents Frustrated Important Mail Is Being Held at USPS Facility Due to Delays*, 11 Alive (Mar. 12, 2024), <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/usps-customers-metro-atlanta-frustrated-their-mail-still-being-held-distribution-facility/85-80ec44b5-77e2-4c4c-a539-208e0e915352>.

affect Georgia’s rural, low-income, and underserved communities, as well as Georgia’s historically-disadvantaged communities and communities of color.

Consolidating and centralizing USPS’s service network may be particularly burdensome for communities that cannot reliably travel to access essential postal services, including the 45 percent of Americans who have no access to public transportation and the one million rural households that do not have access to a car.³ As a public service responsible for delivering to every community in America, USPS must ensure that changes to its processing and delivery network do not create a barrier of distance and decrease the accessibility or timeliness of essential postal services for any community in America.

We are concerned that changes in USPS’s processing and delivery network will adversely affect postal service employees – a diverse workforce of women, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities.⁴ In addition to being more racially and ethnically diverse than the national labor force, over 50 percent of USPS employees in 18 states are women, and 16 percent of USPS employees are veterans.⁵ We are concerned that changes in USPS’s processing and delivery network will result in the relocation of postal service jobs and will require postal employees to service longer routes under the same delivery expectations. USPS must ensure that changes to its processing and delivery network do not lead to more burdensome travel distances or work conditions for postal employees.

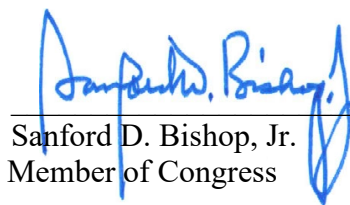
With these concerns in mind, we respectfully request that the USPS OIG Final Report on the Atlanta RPDC in Palmetto, GA, include an analysis of whether these operational changes will disproportionately affect or further disadvantage Georgia’s rural, low-income, and underserved communities, as well as Georgia’s historically-disadvantaged communities and communities of color, including members of USPS’s own workforce. USPS must ensure that any modifications to its processing and delivery network do not adversely affect USPS’s hardworking employees or impede USPS’s ability to reliably provide secure, accessible, and efficient services to all USPS customers.

Thank you for your attention to this issue of critical importance.

Sincerely,



Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

³ *Public Transportation Facts*, American Public Transportation Association (2024), <https://www.apta.com/news-publications/public-transportation-facts>; Anothy Boutros, Sharon Field, and Kevin Resler, *Integrating Equity into Transportation: An Overview of USDOT Efforts*, U.S. Department of Transportation (2023), <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/spring-2023/05>.

⁴ Drew DeSilver and Katherine Schaeffer, *The State Of The U.S. Postal Service In 8 Charts*, Pew Research Center (May 14, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/05/14/the-state-of-the-u-s-postal-service-in-8-charts>.

⁵ *Id.*



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