

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 184

Reps. Markkanen, Hill, Prestin, Cavitt, Alexander, Bezotte, Fitzgerald, Glanville, Haadsma, Paiz, Rheingans and Young offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to vehemently oppose the transfer of mail
2 processing operations from the Iron Mountain Processing and
3 Distribution Center to the Green Bay Processing and Distribution
4 Center in Wisconsin.

5 Whereas, The United States Postal Service has a long and
6 venerable tradition of serving as a great equalizer between the
7 people of our nation. Both the Articles of Confederation and the
8 Constitution of the United States gave Congress the power to
9 establish a system of post offices, and a Post Office Department
10 was first established by the Second Continental Congress in 1775,
11 with Benjamin Franklin appointed to serve as the Postmaster

1 General. Throughout its 250-year history, the Post Office has
2 chosen time and time again to prioritize service over profit, from
3 President Washington's support for the subsidization of
4 stagecoaches in the 1780s, to the construction of money-losing
5 postal routes to encourage settlement in the west during the mid-
6 19th century, to the creation of the Pony Express to deliver the
7 mail through extreme environments in 1860, to the elimination of
8 price differences based on the distance a letter was to travel in
9 1863. While free home delivery began in cities in 1863, it was not
10 initially offered in rural areas, though they paid the same rates.
11 After initial experiments showed how happy rural customers were to
12 be given the same attention as city-dwellers, rural free delivery
13 became a permanent service in 1902. It is the mission of the United
14 States Postal Service "to bind the Nation together through the
15 personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the
16 people"; and

17 Whereas, The Post Office is a service that we, as a society,
18 have chosen to provide to our people. There is no constitutional
19 mandate that the Post Office be run as a profitable business
20 enterprise; to the contrary, our history shows that we have
21 repeatedly used the Post Office to ensure that every American, no
22 matter where they live, is connected through the post. The people
23 can choose the level of postal service that they want the United
24 States Postal Service to provide, and they can decide what costs
25 they are willing to bear to provide that service; and

26 Whereas, Contrary to the desires of many that the United
27 States Postal Service put service first, there are those who insist
28 that it must be run like a business. The "Delivering for America"
29 plan, published in March 2021, emphasizes the financial viability

1 of the Postal Service, with a focus on raising enough revenue to
2 cover their operating costs and fund new investments. The plan
3 proudly proclaims that it will enable the United States Postal
4 Service to operate with a positive net income, and the most recent
5 report boasts that it has reduced projected ten-year losses from
6 160 billion dollars to 70 billion dollars. These publications read
7 like a corporate marketing pitch, establishing goals such as a
8 "more rational pricing approach," a "stable and empowered
9 workforce" and a "bold approach to growth, innovation and continued
10 relevance." What these profit-minded advocates seemingly fail to
11 recognize is that lower-quality service and higher prices drive
12 customers away, decreasing use of the postal service and thus
13 decreasing revenue, while simultaneously undermining the Postal
14 Service's mission of binding the nation together; and

15 Whereas, The United States Postal Service's focus on financial
16 optimization has already had negative impacts on those living in
17 rural areas, such as Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Local post offices
18 have changed the time when mail is gathered for delivery from the
19 afternoon to the early morning, meaning that a piece of mail
20 dropped off during the day will remain at the post office for far
21 longer before the shipping process begins. In practical effect,
22 this adds one day to shipping times even while allowing the Postal
23 Service to deny having done so for accounting purposes.
24 Additionally, one-day Priority Mail Express shipping, which was
25 available as recently as early January 2024, is no longer available
26 from the UP to anywhere in Michigan; instead, citizens are being
27 charged the same rate for two-day shipping. Combined with the
28 change in collection time above, next-day shipping has essentially
29 been transformed into three-day shipping. This is extremely

1 problematic for businesses and health departments that need to
2 collect samples of drinking water and have them delivered to a
3 laboratory for bacterial testing within 24 hours of sampling.
4 Delays in shipping also have negative consequences for patients who
5 receive medications through the mail, for people who need to ensure
6 their bills are paid on time, and for businesses delivering frozen
7 foods such as the UP's beloved pasties. Focusing too much on the
8 postal network as a whole while ignoring the importance of timely
9 local shipping is not modernization; it is regression. The people
10 of the Upper Peninsula want what's best for their communities, not
11 what's best for the pocketbooks of those in Washington; and

12 Whereas, In January 2024, the United States Postal Service
13 announced plans to transfer some mail processing services,
14 including outgoing mail operations, from the Iron Mountain
15 Processing and Distribution Center in Kingsford, Michigan, to the
16 Green Bay Processing and Distribution Center in Wisconsin. The
17 Postal Service has justified this plan based on the fact that a
18 majority of the mail and packages sent from the Iron Mountain area
19 are destined for locations outside the local area. While this might
20 make sense from the standpoint of the Postal Service as a
21 nationwide business, it does not make sense for the people of the
22 Upper Peninsula, for whom timely local delivery is essential. The
23 notices that have been published about this plan assure that, while
24 five craft employee positions will be eliminated, no management
25 positions will be eliminated. But the notices also indicate that
26 there will be reassignments, which means that some employees could
27 be left without a job if they are unwilling to be reassigned to a
28 post office far away. Furthermore, recent changes to the Iron
29 Mountain facility may have led to inaccurate conclusions about the

1 need for it, stacking the deck so that the evidence would support
2 the conclusion the government was looking for. The capacity of the
3 Green Bay facility to handle the mail from the Iron Mountain area
4 is curiously left out of the government's preliminary findings.
5 When similar notices across the country all use identical,
6 buzzword-riddled language about efficiency, cost-effectiveness,
7 modern strategies, and "rightsizing" the postal workforce, it
8 becomes difficult to trust that they have made a careful, informed
9 decision about the proper level of services to provide at the Iron
10 Mountain facility; now, therefore, be it

11 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we vehemently
12 oppose the transfer of mail processing operations from the Iron
13 Mountain Processing and Distribution Center to the Green Bay
14 Processing and Distribution Center in Wisconsin; and be it further

15 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
16 Governor of Michigan, the President of the United States, the
17 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United
18 States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan
19 congressional delegation, and the United States Postmaster General.