



Dear Senator:

I am writing concerning the potential closing of thousands of small rural post offices that the Postal Service is considering throughout the country. My name is Mark Strong and I am the President of the National League of Postmasters, a national association of postmasters that was founded in the late 1800s and represents tens of thousands of postmasters throughout the country, many of whom serve rural America.

There are several facts you should know concerning rural post offices.

First, no tax dollars are involved in the closing of these post offices. The Postal Service is completely supported by postage, and thus is supported by *no tax dollars*. Closing or not closing a post office has absolutely no effect on the federal deficit.

Second, the cost to the Postal Service of the smallest 10,000 post offices is roughly 7/10s of one percent of the entire Postal Service's budget. The cost of the current 3700 small post offices that the Postal Service is considering closing is less than half of that. This is the equivalent of a rounding error in the Postal Service's budget. Thus, closing these post offices and indeed ALL rural post offices would have *no appreciable effect* on the Postal Service's budget, nor on the financial challenges it has to meet.

Third, as you surely know from your rural constituents, small rural post offices generally play a key role in America's rural communities and are the glue that holds rural America together, even in this electronic age. Proponents of closing rural post offices, few of which are from rural areas, have suggested that the communications picture in rural America is radically different today than it was thirty years ago. This is simply not true. Much of the electronic revolution has only slowly penetrated rural America and small rural post offices are no less key to rural America's survival in these turbulent economic times than they were forty years ago.

Indeed, a town without a post office is a town without an identity and will find it very difficult to attract a company to locate there. No company wants to be in a town that doesn't even have its own post office. Thus, closing a town's post office automatically eliminates economic development that it might have or wish to have. This dynamic often results in the town drying up and disappearing, which in turn has a ruinous effect on an area's overall economy. Multiply that by thousands and one has to conclude that the effect overall on rural America would be disastrous.

Finally, we believe that the Postal Service fully intends to close all rural post offices in the next six to eight years. The time to stop this is now, before any serious damage is done. You can make a difference.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Sincerely

Mark Strong
President