



San Antonio Alamo Area Local Legislative Updates



Letty Alejandro – Legislative Director
LD0195@att.net

Alex Aleman – President, San Antonio Alamo Area Local

Volume 1 No. 8

October 21, 2015



GAO: USPS SCORES POORLY ON MAIL TRACKING

The U.S. Postal Service doesn't even measure whether half of the mail it handles is delivered on time, according to a new report from a federal watchdog.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) said that USPS only measures whether 55 percent of mail is delivered when expected, excluding the other 45 percent for a variety of reasons. There are two main reasons that 45 percent of the mail is excluded from the delivery tests: Some don't have the required barcodes to track, while the agency is missing crucial information — such as when a letter is processed into the USPS system — for other pieces.

GAO also called out the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), for not pressing USPS more vigorously on the matter. In its report, the watchdog made the case that policymakers will have more trouble finding solutions to USPS's fiscal problems without more comprehensive information about delivery standards. "Quality delivery performance information is needed for USPS and postal stakeholders such as PRC, Congress, business mailers, and the general public to develop useful analysis that can help oversee or assess the balance between USPS's cost-cutting to address its poor financial situation while maintaining affordable postal rates and providing timely, universal delivery service," the GAO's report said.

USPS said it strongly disagreed with the watchdog's findings, because it uses "the expertise of a highly reputable firm with long-standing proficiency in the design and execution of measurement systems that yield results that are statistically valid and reliable." "The Postal Service is strongly committed to transparency and the regular publication of our service performance results, including those in rural areas through a rural service measurement initiative," the agency added.

The Postal Service has lost billions of dollars over the past few years as first-class mail volume has declined, though the rise of online shopping has caused the agency's fiscal situation to stabilize. Most of the agency's losses were due to a required prepayment for future retiree healthcare, and USPS has posted some quarters with operating profits in recent times. Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) has introduced a comprehensive plan to revamp the Postal Service, but the issue has lost momentum in recent years as the agency has found itself on firmer footing.

Lawmakers representing rural states have been particularly concerned about the Postal Service, and have complained that consolidations of mail processing centers and other policy changes have slowed down delivery standards.

"While the Postal Service can and should take steps to address these serious shortcomings in performance and transparency, Congress must also help the Postal Service get better in this area," Carper said in a statement.