

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1742

To improve the provision of postal services to rural areas of the United States.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 9, 2015

Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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## A BILL

To improve the provision of postal services to rural areas of the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Rural Postal Act of 2015”.

6 (b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for  
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Maintenance of delivery service standards.
- Sec. 4. Preservation of 6-day delivery.
- Sec. 5. Protection of rural post offices.
- Sec. 6. Protection of workforce rights.

- Sec. 7. Alternative Means of Transportation contracts.  
 Sec. 8. Rural Postal Service Advisory Commission.  
 Sec. 9. Equipping delivery vehicles for rural areas.  
 Sec. 10. Wi-Fi in rural post offices.  
 Sec. 11. Protection of door and curbside delivery.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

3 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”  
 4 means the Postal Regulatory Commission.

5 (2) POSTAL SERVICE.—The term “Postal Serv-  
 6 ice” means the United States Postal Service.

7 **SEC. 3. MAINTENANCE OF DELIVERY SERVICE STANDARDS.**

8 (a) PRESERVING MAIL PROCESSING CAPACITY; RE-  
 9 VIEW OF DISCONTINUANCES, CLOSINGS, AND CONSOLIDA-  
 10 TIONS.—

11 (1) MORATORIUM ON CLOSING OR CONSOLI-  
 12 DATING POSTAL FACILITIES.—During the 2-year pe-  
 13 riod beginning on the date of enactment of this Act,  
 14 the Postal Service may not close or consolidate any  
 15 postal facility (as defined in section 404(f) of title  
 16 39, United States Code, as added by this sub-  
 17 section).

18 (2) PROCEDURES FOR CLOSING OR CONSOLIDA-  
 19 TION OF POSTAL FACILITIES.—Section 404 of title  
 20 39, United States Code, is amended by adding at  
 21 the end the following:

22 “(f) CLOSING OR CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN  
 23 POSTAL FACILITIES.—

1           “(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term  
2           ‘postal facility’ means a processing and distribution  
3           center, processing and distribution facility, network  
4           distribution center, or other facility that is operated  
5           by the Postal Service, the primary function of which  
6           is to sort and process mail.

7           “(2) AREA MAIL PROCESSING STUDIES.—

8           “(A) APPLICABILITY.—In this para-  
9           graph—

10           “(i) the term ‘area mail processing  
11           study’ means an area mail processing fea-  
12           sibility study described in section 2–1 of  
13           Handbook PO–408 of the Postal Service,  
14           entitled ‘Area Mail Processing Guidelines’,  
15           as in effect on October 1, 2013;

16           “(ii) the term ‘closing’, with respect to  
17           a covered postal facility, means the trans-  
18           fer of all incoming and outgoing mail  
19           sortation and processing operations of the  
20           covered postal facility to a different cov-  
21           ered postal facility;

22           “(iii) the term ‘consolidate’, with re-  
23           spect to a covered postal facility, means  
24           the transfer of either all incoming or all  
25           outgoing mail sortation and processing op-

1 erations of the covered postal facility to a  
2 different covered postal facility; and

3 “(iv) the term ‘covered postal facility’  
4 means a postal facility, the primary func-  
5 tion of which is to sort and process first-  
6 class mail originating or designating within  
7 a defined geographic area.

8 “(B) NEW AREA MAIL PROCESSING STUD-  
9 IES.—Before making a determination under  
10 subsection (a)(3) as to the necessity for the  
11 closing or consolidation of a covered postal fa-  
12 cility, the Postal Service shall—

13 “(i) conduct an area mail processing  
14 study relating to the covered postal facility  
15 that includes consideration of a plan to re-  
16 duce the capacity of the covered postal fa-  
17 cility without closing the covered postal fa-  
18 cility; and

19 “(ii) upon completing the study under  
20 clause (i)—

21 “(I) publish the results of the  
22 study on the website of the Postal  
23 Service; and

24 “(II) publish a notice that the  
25 study is complete and the results of

1 the study are available to the public,  
2 including on the website of the Postal  
3 Service.

4 “(C) COMPLETED OR ONGOING AREA MAIL  
5 PROCESSING STUDIES.—

6 “(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a  
7 covered postal facility described in clause  
8 (ii), the Postal Service shall—

9 “(I) consider a plan to reduce the  
10 capacity of the covered postal facility  
11 without closing the covered postal fa-  
12 cility; and

13 “(II) publish the results of the  
14 consideration under subclause (I) with  
15 or as an amendment to the area mail  
16 processing study relating to the cov-  
17 ered postal facility.

18 “(ii) POSTAL FACILITIES.—A covered  
19 postal facility described in this clause is a  
20 covered postal facility—

21 “(I) for which, as of the date of  
22 enactment of this subsection, an area  
23 mail processing study—

24 “(aa) has been completed  
25 but does not include a plan to re-

1                   duce the capacity of the covered  
2                   postal facility without closing the  
3                   covered postal facility; or

4                               “(bb) is in progress; and

5                               “(II) which, as of the date of en-  
6                   actment of this subsection, has not  
7                   been closed or consolidated.

8                   “(3) NOTICE, PUBLIC COMMENT, AND PUBLIC  
9                   HEARING.—If the Postal Service makes a determina-  
10                  tion under subsection (a)(3) to close or consolidate  
11                  a postal facility, the Postal Service shall—

12                               “(A) provide notice of the determination  
13                  to—

14                                       “(i) Congress; and

15                                       “(ii) the Postal Regulatory Commis-  
16                  sion;

17                               “(B) provide adequate public notice of the  
18                  intention of the Postal Service to close or con-  
19                  solidate the postal facility;

20                               “(C) ensure that interested persons have  
21                  an opportunity to submit public comments dur-  
22                  ing a 45-day period after the Postal Service  
23                  provides the notice of intention under subpara-  
24                  graph (B);

1           “(D) before the 45-day period described in  
2           subparagraph (C), provide public notice of the  
3           opportunity under subparagraph (C) to submit  
4           public comments during that period by—

5                   “(i) publication on the website of the  
6                   Postal Service;

7                   “(ii) posting at the affected postal fa-  
8                   cility; and

9                   “(iii) publicizing the date and location  
10                  of the public community meeting under  
11                  subparagraph (E); and

12                  “(E) during the 45-day period described in  
13                  subparagraph (C), conduct a public meeting  
14                  that provides an opportunity for comments to  
15                  be submitted verbally or in writing.

16                  “(4) FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS.—The Postal  
17                  Service, in making a determination under subsection  
18                  (a)(3) to close or consolidate a postal facility, shall  
19                  consider—

20                   “(A) the views presented by interested per-  
21                   sons under paragraph (3);

22                   “(B) the effect of the closing or consolida-  
23                   tion on the affected community, including the  
24                   impact the closing or consolidation may have on  
25                   a State, region, or locality;

1           “(C) the effect of the closing or consolida-  
2           tion on the travel times and distances for af-  
3           fected customers to access services under the  
4           proposed closing or consolidation;

5           “(D) the effect of the closing or consolida-  
6           tion on delivery times for all classes of mail and  
7           packages;

8           “(E) any characteristics of certain geo-  
9           graphical areas, such as remoteness, broadband  
10          internet availability with a lower rates of access  
11          than the average rate of access in other geo-  
12          graphical areas of the United States, and  
13          weather-related obstacles, that may result in  
14          the closing or consolidation having a unique ef-  
15          fect;

16          “(F) the effect of the closing or consolida-  
17          tion on small businesses in the area, including  
18          shipping and communications with customers  
19          and suppliers and the corresponding impact on  
20          revenues, operations, and growth;

21          “(G) the extent to which significant  
22          changes in delivery service resulting from the  
23          closure or consolidation of the postal facility  
24          would affect the ability of individuals and busi-



1 nesses in the region served by the postal facility  
2 to participate in the national economy;

3 “(H) the ability of the Postal Service to  
4 maintain a safe working environment at each  
5 postal facility that, as a result of the closing or  
6 consolidation, would process the mail that had  
7 been processed by the closed or consolidated  
8 postal facility, including by examining—

9 “(i) the capacity of each affected post-  
10 al facility to process a greater volume of  
11 mail;

12 “(ii) the ability of the workforce at  
13 each affected postal facility to handle a  
14 larger workload; and

15 “(iii) whether the Postal Service  
16 would need to hire additional employees at  
17 affected postal facilities to process the in-  
18 creased volume of mail;

19 “(I) the extent to which the Postal Service  
20 can take action to mitigate significant negative  
21 impacts identified through the considerations  
22 under this paragraph; and

23 “(J) any other factor the Postal Service  
24 determines is necessary.

1           “(5) NOTICE OF FINAL DETERMINATION; JUS-  
2           TIFICATION STATEMENT.—If the Postal Service de-  
3           termines to close or consolidate a postal facility, the  
4           Postal Service shall post on the website of the Postal  
5           Service—

6                   “(A) notice of the final determination to  
7                   close or consolidate the postal facility; and

8                   “(B) a closing or consolidation justification  
9                   statement that includes—

10                           “(i) a response to the public com-  
11                           ments received with respect to the consid-  
12                           erations described under paragraph (4);

13                           “(ii) a description of the consider-  
14                           ations made by the Postal Service under  
15                           paragraph (4); and

16                           “(iii) the actions that the Postal Serv-  
17                           ice will take to mitigate any significant  
18                           negative effects identified under paragraph  
19                           (4).

20           “(6) CLOSING OR CONSOLIDATION OF POSTAL  
21           FACILITIES.—

22                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not earlier than 15  
23                   days after the date on which the Postal Service  
24                   posts notice of a final determination and a jus-  
25                   tification statement under paragraph (5) with

1 respect to a postal facility, the Postal Service  
2 may close or consolidate the postal facility.

3 “(B) ALTERNATIVE INTAKE OF MAIL.—If  
4 the Postal Service closes or consolidates a post-  
5 al facility under subparagraph (A), the Postal  
6 Service shall make reasonable efforts to ensure  
7 continued mail receipt from customers of the  
8 closed or consolidated postal facility at the  
9 same location or at another appropriate location  
10 in close geographic proximity to the closed or  
11 consolidated postal facility.

12 “(7) PROTECTION OF CERTAIN INFORMA-  
13 TION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed  
14 to require the Postal Service to disclose any—

15 “(A) proprietary data;

16 “(B) information relating to the security of  
17 a postal facility; or

18 “(C) information that is exempt from dis-  
19 closure under section 552 of title 5.

20 “(8) POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION AP-  
21 PEALS.—

22 “(A) RIGHT TO APPEAL.—A determination  
23 of the Postal Service to close or consolidate any  
24 postal facility may be appealed by any person  
25 served by the postal facility to the Postal Regu-

1 latory Commission not later than 30 days after  
2 the date on which the determination is posted  
3 on the Postal Service website under paragraph  
4 (5).

5 “(B) REVIEW BASED ON RECORD.—The  
6 Commission shall review a determination ap-  
7 pealed under this paragraph on the basis of the  
8 record before the Postal Service in the making  
9 of the determination.

10 “(C) DEADLINE FOR COMMISSION DETER-  
11 MINATION.—The Commission shall make a de-  
12 termination based upon a review conducted  
13 under subparagraph (B) not later than 90 days  
14 after the date on which the Commission receives  
15 the appeal of the determination under subpara-  
16 graph (A).

17 “(D) BASES FOR SETTING ASIDE POSTAL  
18 SERVICE DETERMINATIONS.—In making a de-  
19 termination under subparagraph (C), the Com-  
20 mission shall set aside any determination, find-  
21 ing, or conclusion of the Postal Service that the  
22 Commission determines—

23 “(i) is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse  
24 of discretion, or otherwise not in accord-  
25 ance with the law;

1           “(ii) is without observance of the pro-  
2           cedures required under this subsection or  
3           any other applicable law; or

4           “(iii) is unsupported by substantial  
5           evidence on the record.

6           “(E) OPTION TO AFFIRM OR REMAND.—

7           The Commission—

8           “(i) may affirm a determination of the  
9           Postal Service appealed under this para-  
10          graph or order that the entire matter be  
11          returned for further consideration; and

12          “(ii) may not modify the determina-  
13          tion of the Postal Service.

14          “(F) TEMPORARY SUSPENSION.—The  
15          Commission may suspend the effectiveness of a  
16          determination of the Postal Service appealed  
17          under this paragraph until the final disposition  
18          of the appeal.

19          “(G) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAWS.—

20          The provisions of section 556, section 557, and  
21          chapter 7 of title 5 shall not apply to any re-  
22          view carried out by the Commission under this  
23          paragraph.

1           “(H) DATE OF RECEIPT OF APPEAL.—For  
2 purposes of subparagraph (A), any appeal re-  
3 ceived by the Commission shall—

4           “(i) if sent to the Commission  
5 through the mails, be considered to have  
6 been received on the date of the Postal  
7 Service postmark on the envelope or other  
8 cover in which the appeal is mailed; or

9           “(ii) if otherwise lawfully delivered to  
10 the Commission, be considered to have  
11 been received on the date determined based  
12 on any appropriate documentation or other  
13 indicia (as determined under regulations of  
14 the Commission).”.

15       (b) MAINTENANCE OF DELIVERY SERVICE STAND-  
16 ARDS.—

17       (1) REINSTATEMENT OF OVERNIGHT SERVICE  
18 STANDARDS.—

19           (A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the  
20 term “market-dominant product” means a  
21 product subject to subchapter I of chapter 36  
22 of title 39, United States Code.

23           (B) STANDARDS FOR MARKET-DOMINANT  
24 PRODUCTS.—The Postal Service shall apply the  
25 service standards for market-dominant products

1 under part 121 of title 39, Code of Federal  
2 Regulations, that were in effect on July 1,  
3 2012.

4 (2) COMMISSION STUDY AND REPORT.—

5 (A) STUDY.—The Commission shall con-  
6 duct a study that assesses—

7 (i) how the Postal Service measures  
8 delivery times for the purpose of deter-  
9 mining whether service standards have  
10 been met; and

11 (ii) whether the method used by the  
12 Postal Service to measure delivery times  
13 reflects the total period of time beginning  
14 when a mailed item is transferred from a  
15 postal customer and ending when the  
16 mailed item arrives at its final destination.

17 (B) REPORT.—

18 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1  
19 year after the date of enactment of this  
20 Act, and after conducting the hearing  
21 under clause (ii), the Commission shall  
22 submit to the Committee on Homeland Se-  
23 curity and Governmental Affairs of the  
24 Senate and the Committee on Oversight  
25 and Government Reform of the House of

1           Representatives a report on the findings of  
2           the study conducted under subparagraph  
3           (A) that includes recommendations as to  
4           whether the Postal Service should use ad-  
5           ditional or improved methods to—

6                   (I) measure the actual delivery  
7                   times experienced by postal cus-  
8                   tomers; and

9                   (II) assess compliance with the  
10                  service standards promulgated under  
11                  section 3691 of title 39, United States  
12                  Code.

13           (ii) HEARING.—Before the Commis-  
14           sion submits the report under clause (i),  
15           the Commission shall—

16                   (I) conduct a hearing on the  
17                   record under sections 556 and 557 of  
18                   title 5, United States Code, to provide  
19                   the Postal Service, users of the mail,  
20                   and an officer of the Commission re-  
21                   quired to represent the interests of  
22                   the general public the opportunity to  
23                   present views on the proposed report;  
24                   and



1 (II) revise the report as the Com-  
2 mission determines appropriate to in-  
3 corporate the views presented at the  
4 hearing conducted under subclause  
5 (I).

6 (C) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the  
7 study under subparagraph (A), the Commission  
8 shall consult with the Inspector General of the  
9 Postal Service.

10 **SEC. 4. PRESERVATION OF 6-DAY DELIVERY.**

11 Section 403 of title 39, United States Code, is  
12 amended by adding at the end the following:

13 “(d) The Postal Service shall provide 6-day delivery  
14 and rural delivery of mail at not less than the level re-  
15 quired under the second proviso under the heading ‘PAY-  
16 MENT TO THE POSTAL SERVICE FUND’ under the heading  
17 ‘UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE’ under title V of divi-  
18 sion E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appro-  
19 priations Act, 2015 (Public Law 113–235; 128 Stat.  
20 2373) (commonly referred to as the ‘1983 level’).”.

21 **SEC. 5. PROTECTION OF RURAL POST OFFICES.**

22 Section 404(d) of title 39, United States Code, is  
23 amended—

24 (1) by striking “(6) For purposes of paragraph  
25 (5)” and inserting the following:

1           “(8) DATE OF RECEIPT OF APPEALS.—For pur-  
2 poses of paragraph (7)”;

3           (2) by striking “(5) A determination” and in-  
4 serting the following:

5           “(7) APPEALS.—A determination”;

6           (3) by striking “(d)(1) The Postal Service” and  
7 all that follows through the end of paragraph (4)  
8 and inserting the following:

9           “(d) DISCONTINUANCE OF POST OFFICES.—

10           “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

11           “(A) the term ‘discontinuance’ has the  
12 meaning given the term in section 241.3 of title  
13 39, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on  
14 November 1, 2013;

15           “(B) the term ‘local government’ means—

16           “(i) a county, municipality, city, town,  
17 township, local public authority, special  
18 district, intrastate district, council of gov-  
19 ernment, or regional or interstate govern-  
20 ment entity;

21           “(ii) an agency or instrumentality of  
22 an entity described in clause (i); or

23           “(iii) a rural community, an unincor-  
24 porated town or village, or an instrumen-

1           tality of a rural community or an unincor-  
2           porated town or village;

3           “(C) the term ‘post office’ means a post  
4           office, post office branch, post office classified  
5           station, or other facility that is operated by the  
6           Postal Service, the primary function of which is  
7           to provide retail postal services; and

8           “(D) the term ‘rural post office’ means a  
9           post office that is—

10                   “(i) in a rural area, as defined by the  
11                   Census Bureau; and

12                   “(ii) within the K or L cost ascertain-  
13                   ment grouping, as classified by the Postal  
14                   Service.

15           “(2) PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.—The  
16           Postal Service, prior to making a determination  
17           under subsection (a)(3) of this section as to the ne-  
18           cessity for the discontinuance of any post office,  
19           and, with respect to a determination to discontinue  
20           a rural post office, prior to making the determina-  
21           tions required under paragraph (5), shall—

22                   “(A) consider whether—

23                   “(i) to discontinue the post office and  
24                   combine it with another post office located  
25                   within a reasonable distance;

1 “(ii) instead of discontinuing the post  
2 office—

3 “(I) to reduce the number of  
4 hours a day that the post office oper-  
5 ates; or

6 “(II) to continue operating the  
7 post office for the same number of  
8 hours a day;

9 “(iii) to procure a contract providing  
10 full, or less than full, retail postal services  
11 in the community served by the post office;  
12 or

13 “(iv) to provide postal services to the  
14 community served by the post office—

15 “(I) through a letter carrier or  
16 by Alternate Means of Transportation  
17 delivery contract;

18 “(II) by collocating postal services  
19 at a commercial or government entity;  
20 or

21 “(III) by implementing an alter-  
22 native proposal made by a local gov-  
23 ernment under subparagraph (B)(iii);

24 “(B) provide—

1           “(i) relevant information on financial  
2           costs associated with the operations of the  
3           post office to postal customers and local  
4           governments served by the post office;

5           “(ii) postal customers served by the  
6           post office an opportunity to present their  
7           views, which may be by nonbinding survey  
8           conducted by mail; and

9           “(iii) local governments served by the  
10          post office an opportunity to present alter-  
11          native proposals for providing postal serv-  
12          ices to the community; and

13          “(C) if the Postal Service determines to  
14          discontinue the post office, provide adequate  
15          public notice of its intention to discontinue the  
16          post office at least 60 days prior to the pro-  
17          posed date of the discontinuance to persons and  
18          local governments served by the post office.

19          “(3) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Postal Service, in  
20          making a determination whether or not to dis-  
21          continue a post office—

22                 “(A) shall consider—

23                         “(i) the effect of the discontinuance  
24                         on the community served by the post of-  
25                         fice;

1           “(ii) the effect of the discontinuance  
2           on businesses, including small businesses,  
3           in the area;

4           “(iii) the effect of the discontinuance  
5           on employees of the Postal Service em-  
6           ployed at the post office;

7           “(iv) whether the discontinuance  
8           would have a significant adverse effect on  
9           regular postal services to rural areas, com-  
10          munities, and small towns where post of-  
11          fices are not self-sustaining;

12          “(v) the extent to which the commu-  
13          nity served by the post office lacks access  
14          to Internet, broadband, or cellular tele-  
15          phone service;

16          “(vi) the extent to which postal cus-  
17          tomers served by the post office would con-  
18          tinue after the discontinuance to receive  
19          substantially similar access to essential  
20          items, such as prescription drugs and time-  
21          sensitive communications;

22          “(vii) the proximity and accessibility  
23          of other post offices;

1           “(viii) whether substantial economic  
2 savings to the Postal Service would result  
3 from the discontinuance; and

4           “(ix) any other factors that the Postal  
5 Service determines are necessary; and

6           “(B) may not consider compliance with  
7 any provision of the Occupational Safety and  
8 Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.).

9           “(4) WRITTEN DETERMINATION AND FIND-  
10 INGS.—

11           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Any determination of  
12 the Postal Service to discontinue a post office  
13 shall—

14           “(i) be in writing;

15           “(ii) include the findings of the Postal  
16 Service with respect to the considerations  
17 required to be made under paragraph (3);  
18 and

19           “(iii) with respect to a determination  
20 to discontinue a rural post office, include a  
21 summary of the determinations required  
22 under paragraph (5).

23           “(B) AVAILABILITY OF FINDINGS.—The  
24 Postal Service shall make available, to persons  
25 served by a post office that the Postal Service

1 determines to discontinue, any determination  
2 and findings under subparagraph (A) with re-  
3 spect to that post office.

4 “(C) NOTICE BEFORE DISCONTINUANCE.—  
5 The Postal Service may not take any action to  
6 discontinue a post office until 60 days after the  
7 date on which the Postal Service makes avail-  
8 able, to persons served by the post office, the  
9 written determination and findings with respect  
10 to the post office as required under subpara-  
11 graph (B).

12 “(5) RURAL POST OFFICES.—

13 “(A) MORATORIUM ON DISCONTINUANCE  
14 OF RURAL POST OFFICES.—The Postal Service  
15 may not discontinue a rural post office during  
16 the 1-year period beginning on the date of en-  
17 actment of the Rural Postal Act of 2015.

18 “(B) REQUIREMENTS FOR DISCONTINU-  
19 ANCE OF RURAL POST OFFICES.—The Postal  
20 Service may not make a determination under  
21 subsection (a)(3) to discontinue a rural post of-  
22 fice unless the Postal Service—

23 “(i)(I) determines that postal cus-  
24 tomers served by the post office would con-  
25 tinue after the discontinuance to receive



1 substantially similar access to essential  
2 items, such as prescription medications  
3 and time-sensitive communications, that  
4 are sent through the mails; or

5 “(II) takes action to substantially  
6 ameliorate any projected reduction in ac-  
7 cess to essential items described in sub-  
8 clause (I); and

9 “(ii) determines that—

10 “(I) there is unlikely to be sub-  
11 stantial economic loss to the commu-  
12 nity served by the post office as a re-  
13 sult of the discontinuance;

14 “(II) the area served by the post  
15 office has adequate access to  
16 broadband Internet service, as identi-  
17 fied on the National Broadband Map  
18 of the National Telecommunications  
19 and Information Administration; and

20 “(III) there is a road with year-  
21 round access connecting the commu-  
22 nity to another post office that is  
23 within 10 miles from the post office  
24 proposed to be discontinued.

25 “(C) STUDY AND REPORT.—

1           “(i) STUDY.—The Inspector General  
2 shall conduct a study after the discontinu-  
3 ance of a rural post office under this sec-  
4 tion, which shall include—

5                   “(I) the actual cost savings re-  
6 sulting from the discontinuance; and

7                   “(II) a comparison between the  
8 findings described in subclause (I)  
9 and the cost savings that the Postal  
10 Service predicted would result from  
11 the discontinuance.

12           “(ii) REPORT.—Not later than 2  
13 years after the date of the discontinuance  
14 of a rural post office under this section,  
15 the Inspector General shall submit a report  
16 on the findings of the study conducted  
17 under clause (i) with respect to the rural  
18 post office to—

19                   “(I) the Postal Regulatory Com-  
20 mission;

21                   “(II) the Board of Governors;

22                   “(III) the Committee on Home-  
23 land Security and Governmental Af-  
24 fairs of the Senate;

1                   “(IV) the Committee on Over-  
2                   sight and Government Reform of the  
3                   House of Representatives;

4                   “(V) the Member of the House of  
5                   Representatives in whose district the  
6                   rural post office was located; and

7                   “(VI) the Senators in whose  
8                   State the rural post office was lo-  
9                   cated.

10                  “(iii) SUNSET.—This subparagraph is  
11                  repealed effective 10 years after the date  
12                  of enactment of the Rural Postal Act of  
13                  2015.

14                  “(6) REDUCTIONS IN HOURS OF OPERATION.—

15                  “(A) MORATORIUM ON REDUCTION OF  
16                  HOURS OF OPERATION OF RURAL POST OF-  
17                  FICES.—The Postal Service may not reduce the  
18                  hours of operation of a rural post office during  
19                  the 2-year period beginning on the date of en-  
20                  actment of the Rural Postal Act of 2015.

21                  “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Postal Serv-  
22                  ice, prior to making a determination under  
23                  paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(I) to reduce the number of  
24                  hours per day that a post office operates, shall  
25                  consider—

1           “(i) the impact of the proposed reduc-  
2           tion in hours on local businesses;

3           “(ii) the effect of the proposed reduc-  
4           tion in hours on the community served by  
5           the post office;

6           “(iii) the ability of the Postal Service  
7           to hire qualified employees to operate the  
8           post office during the reduced hours;

9           “(iv) the proximity and accessibility of  
10          other post offices within 15 miles of the  
11          post office, and the hours those post offices  
12          are open;

13          “(v) the impact of the proposed reduc-  
14          tion in hours on the elderly and other vul-  
15          nerable populations; and

16          “(vi) the impact of alternative sched-  
17          ules on the community served by the post  
18          office, including consideration of which  
19          schedules would most effectively mitigate  
20          any negative impacts identified under  
21          clauses (i) through (v).

22          “(C) FINDINGS.—If the Postal Service de-  
23          termines, after considering the factors under  
24          subparagraph (B), to reduce the number of  
25          hours per day that a post office operates, the

1 Postal Service shall make available to persons  
2 served by the post office—

3 “(i) a summary of the findings of the  
4 Postal Service under subparagraph (B);

5 “(ii) the hours during which the post  
6 office will be open; and

7 “(iii) an explanation of the change in  
8 hours referred to in clause (ii).

9 “(D) REVIEW PERIOD AFTER REDUCTION  
10 IN HOURS.—

11 “(i) IN GENERAL.—During the 1-year  
12 period beginning on the date on which the  
13 Postal Service implements a reduction in  
14 hours for a post office under paragraph  
15 (2)(A)(ii)(I), the community served by the  
16 post office may submit a complaint to the  
17 Inspector General if the community finds  
18 that the reduction in hours has signifi-  
19 cantly impacted the community in a nega-  
20 tive manner.

21 “(ii) SUFFICIENCY OF COMPLAINT.—  
22 A complaint submitted by a community  
23 under clause (i) shall be sufficient if the  
24 community demonstrates that—

1           “(I) a majority of the members  
2 of the community oppose the reduc-  
3 tion in hours, which may be dem-  
4 onstrated with a signed petition; and

5           “(II) the findings of the Postal  
6 Service under subparagraph (B) upon  
7 which the Postal Service based the de-  
8 termination to reduce the hours of the  
9 post office are no longer valid, which  
10 the community may demonstrate  
11 using evidence of—

12                   “(aa) lobbies in disarray;

13                   “(bb) long wait times in  
14 line;

15                   “(cc) insufficient mail ac-  
16 ceptance options;

17                   “(dd) unaccommodating  
18 post office box service and win-  
19 dow times, including any negative  
20 impact on regional businesses;

21                   “(ee) retail units closing at  
22 times other than the posted  
23 hours;

24                   “(ff) inadequate staffing;

1                   “(gg) running out of postal  
2 supplies;

3                   “(hh) unprofessional em-  
4 ployees or an unfriendly atmos-  
5 phere; and

6                   “(ii) any other factors that  
7 the community believes are rel-  
8 evant.

9                   “(iii) INSPECTOR GENERAL DETER-  
10 MINATION.—

11                   “(I) IN GENERAL.—If the In-  
12 spector General determines that a  
13 complaint submitted under clause (i)  
14 is sufficient, in accordance with clause  
15 (ii), not later than 6 months after the  
16 date on which the Inspector General  
17 receives the complaint, the Inspector  
18 General shall analyze the validity of  
19 the complaint.

20                   “(II) SUBMISSION TO POSTAL  
21 SERVICE.—If the Inspector General,  
22 in analyzing a complaint under sub-  
23 clause (I), determines that the com-  
24 munity that submitted the complaint  
25 has been disproportionately impacted

1 by the reduction in hours, the Inspec-  
2 tor General shall submit to the Postal  
3 Service a report that includes—

4 “(aa) the determination; and  
5 “(bb) a recommendation on  
6 the number of additional hours of  
7 operation per day that would be  
8 sufficient for the postal cus-  
9 tomers served by the post office  
10 to have access to fair and reliable  
11 service.

12 “(iv) IMPLEMENTATION OF REC-  
13 OMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 1 year  
14 after the date on which the Postal Service  
15 receives a report under clause (iii)(II) re-  
16 lating to a post office, the Postal Service  
17 shall adjust the hours of operation of the  
18 post office in accordance with the rec-  
19 ommendation of the Inspector General in  
20 the report.”;

21 (4) in paragraph (7), as so designated—

22 (A) by striking “close or consolidate” and  
23 inserting “discontinue”;

24 (B) by striking “under paragraph (3)” and  
25 inserting “under paragraph (4)”;



1 (C) by moving subparagraphs (A), (B),  
2 and (C) 2 ems to the right; and

3 (D) by moving the flush text following sub-  
4 paragraph (C) 2 ems to the right;

5 (5) in paragraph (8), as so designated, by mov-  
6 ing subparagraphs (A) and (B) 2 ems to the right;  
7 and

8 (6) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(9) MINIMUM RETAIL STANDARDS.—The Post-  
10 al Service shall establish minimum standards for re-  
11 tail postal services.”.

12 **SEC. 6. PROTECTION OF WORKFORCE RIGHTS.**

13 (a) RIGHT OF APPEAL TO MERIT SYSTEMS PROTEC-  
14 TION BOARD.—Section 1005(a)(4)(A)(ii)(I) of title 39,  
15 United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

16 “(I) is an officer or employee of the Postal  
17 Service who—

18 “(aa) is not represented by a bar-  
19 gaining representative recognized under  
20 section 1203; and

21 “(bb) is in a supervisory, professional,  
22 technical, clerical, administrative, or mana-  
23 gerial position covered by the Executive  
24 and Administrative Schedule; and”.

1 (b) SUPERVISORY AND OTHER MANAGERIAL ORGA-  
2 NIZATIONS.—Section 1004 of title 39, United States Code,  
3 is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and fringe  
5 benefits” after “differentials in rates of pay”;

6 (2) in subsection (b), in the second sentence, by  
7 inserting “as provided under subsection (d) and any  
8 changes in, or termination of, pay policies and  
9 schedules and fringe benefit programs for members  
10 of the supervisors’ organization as provided under  
11 subsection (e). Such pay policies and fringe benefit  
12 programs shall reflect adequate differentials in rates  
13 of pay and fringe benefits as provided under sub-  
14 section (a)” before the period; and

15 (3) in subsection (e)(1), by inserting “, or ter-  
16 mination of,” after “any changes in”.

17 (c) CHIEF MORALE OFFICER.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 2 of title 39, United  
19 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the  
20 following:

21 **“§ 209. Chief Morale Officer**

22 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be in the Postal  
23 Service a Chief Morale Officer appointed by the Post-  
24 master General.

1       “(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chief Morale Officer  
2 shall have—

3           “(1) recognized and significant experience in  
4 such fields as human resources, leadership training,  
5 and public administration;

6           “(2) a documented record of innovative think-  
7 ing;

8           “(3) significant experience working with em-  
9 ployees and managers; and

10          “(4) experience with revitalizing and improving  
11 the morale of organizations, corporations, or commu-  
12 nities that have experienced significant financial  
13 challenges or other challenges.

14       “(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Morale Officer  
15 shall—

16           “(1) oversee the employees of the Postal Serv-  
17 ice, including managers, who work in post offices  
18 and postal facilities (as defined in section 404(f));  
19 and

20           “(2) oversee and develop national initiatives  
21 that address—

22                   “(A) working conditions, including—

23                           “(i) employee morale;

24                           “(ii) the physical strain of work;

25                           “(iii) handling of overtime;

- 1 “(iv) consistency of workday hours;  
2 “(v) flexibility in schedules;  
3 “(vi) break schedules;  
4 “(vii) adequate pay;  
5 “(viii) the time of mail delivery;  
6 “(ix) the safety of mail delivery;  
7 “(x) work environment;  
8 “(xi) work-life balance;  
9 “(xii) leadership and management;  
10 and  
11 “(xiii) management accountability;  
12 “(B) staffing, including—  
13 “(i) sufficient staffing;  
14 “(ii) hiring strategies;  
15 “(iii) wages;  
16 “(iv) turnover rate; and  
17 “(v) the balance between temporary  
18 and career employees;  
19 “(C) communication, including—  
20 “(i) employee feedback process;  
21 “(ii) communication between employ-  
22 ees and management; and  
23 “(iii) protections from retribution; and  
24 “(D) training, including—

1                   “(i) sufficient training for new em-  
2                   ployees;

3                   “(ii) the structure of the training pro-  
4                   gram; and

5                   “(iii) addressing frustrations of new  
6                   employees.

7                   “(d) REGIONAL MORALE OFFICERS.—

8                   “(1) APPOINTMENT.—The Chief Morale Officer  
9                   shall appoint a Regional Morale Officer for each  
10                  area, as that term is used in section 221.6 of title  
11                  39, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor  
12                  thereto.

13                  “(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Each Regional Mo-  
14                  rale Officer shall—

15                         “(A) implement the national initiatives of  
16                         the Chief Morale Officer at a regional level;

17                         “(B) hold monthly morale roundtables with  
18                         employees of the Postal Service at which the  
19                         employees can discuss concerns relating to  
20                         working conditions, staffing, communication,  
21                         and training;

22                         “(C) conduct annual regional training ses-  
23                         sions for employees;

24                         “(D) submit biannual feedback reports to  
25                         the Chief Morale Officer; and

1           “(E) participate in regular conference calls  
2           with other Regional Morale Officers and the  
3           Chief Morale Officer to provide feedback on  
4           how initiatives are progressing.”.

5           (2) DEADLINE FOR INITIAL APPOINTMENT.—  
6           Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment  
7           of this Act, the Postmaster General shall appoint a  
8           Chief Morale Officer under section 209 of title 39,  
9           United States Code, as added by paragraph (1).

10          (3) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMEND-  
11          MENT.—The table of sections for chapter 2 of title  
12          39, United States Code, is amended by adding at  
13          the end the following:

“209. Chief Morale Officer.”.

14 **SEC. 7. ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION CON-**  
15 **TRACTS.**

16          (a) RESTRICTION ON DISCONTINUANCE OF ALTER-  
17          NATE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS.—Sec-  
18          tion 404 of title 39, United States Code, as amended by  
19          section 3, is amended by adding at the end the following:

20          “(g) ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION  
21          CONTRACTS.—

22                 “(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term  
23                 ‘covered route’ means a route on which first-class  
24                 mail and periodicals are transported under an Alter-  
25                 nate Means of Transportation contract.

1           “(2) REQUIREMENTS BEFORE CHANGING TO  
2 OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION.—The Postal  
3 Service, prior to making a determination under sub-  
4 section (a)(1) to transport first-class mail or periodi-  
5 cals on a covered route using a means other than  
6 under an Alternate Means of Transportation con-  
7 tract, shall consider—

8           “(A) the effect of the change on—

9           “(i) each community served by the  
10 covered route;

11           “(ii) businesses, including small busi-  
12 nesses, in the area served by the covered  
13 route; and

14           “(iii) employees of the Postal Service  
15 involved in transportation on the covered  
16 route;

17           “(B) whether the change is consistent with  
18 the policy of the Government, as stated in sec-  
19 tion 101(b), that the Postal Service shall pro-  
20 vide a maximum degree of effective and regular  
21 postal services to rural areas, communities, and  
22 small towns where post offices are not self-sus-  
23 taining;

1           “(C) the extent to which each community  
2 served by the covered route lacks access to  
3 Internet service;

4           “(D) the extent to which postal customers  
5 served by the covered route would continue  
6 after the change to receive substantially similar  
7 access to essential items and time-sensitive  
8 communications;

9           “(E) whether substantial economic savings  
10 to the Postal Service would result from the  
11 change;

12           “(F) the average daily volume of mail  
13 transported on the covered route;

14           “(G) any change in the volume of mail  
15 transported on the covered route during the  
16 preceding 12 months;

17           “(H) the capacity of available transpor-  
18 tation service providers to meet the volume  
19 needs of the Postal Service on the covered  
20 route;

21           “(I) the ability of the Postal Service to  
22 procure and access additional transportation ca-  
23 pacity to meet the volume needs of the Postal  
24 Service on the covered route;



1           “(J) the impact of the change on postal fa-  
2           cilities (as that term is defined in subsection  
3           (f)) that use the covered route;

4           “(K) the ability of postal facilities de-  
5           scribed in subparagraph (J) to continue to pro-  
6           vide service that complies with applicable serv-  
7           ice standards after the change; and

8           “(L) any other factors that the Postal  
9           Service determines are necessary.

10          “(3) DETERMINATIONS.—Any determination of  
11          the Postal Service to transport first-class mail or  
12          periodicals on a covered route using a means other  
13          than under an Alternate Means of Transportation  
14          contract shall—

15                 “(A) be in writing;

16                 “(B) include the findings of the Postal  
17          Service with respect to the considerations re-  
18          quired to be made under paragraph (2); and

19                 “(C) be made available by public notice to  
20          persons served by the covered route.

21          “(4) ADVANCE NOTICE OF DETERMINATIONS.—  
22          The Postal Service shall take no action to transport  
23          first-class mail or periodicals on a covered route  
24          using a means other than under an Alternate Means  
25          of Transportation contract until 60 days after the

1 date on which the Postal Service makes available to  
2 persons served by the covered route a written deter-  
3 mination under paragraph (3).”.

4 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date  
5 of enactment of this Act, the Postal Service shall submit  
6 to Congress a report on potential cost savings resulting  
7 from any decision made during the 2-year period begin-  
8 ning on the date of enactment of this Act—

9 (1) to transport first-class mail or periodicals  
10 on a covered route (as defined in section 404(g)(1)  
11 of title 39, United States Code, as added by this sec-  
12 tion) using a means other than under an Alternate  
13 Means of Transportation contract; or

14 (2) to discontinue a post office.

15 **SEC. 8. RURAL POSTAL SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION.**

16 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the  
18 executive branch a Rural Postal Service Advisory  
19 Commission (referred to in this section as the “Advi-  
20 sory Commission”).

21 (2) INDEPENDENCE.—The Advisory Commis-  
22 sion shall not be subject to the supervision of the  
23 Board of Governors of the Postal Service (referred  
24 to in this section as the “Board of Governors”), the

1 Postmaster General, or any other officer or employee  
2 of the Postal Service.

3 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Advisory Com-  
4 mission is to—

5 (1) provide strategic guidance to the President,  
6 Congress, the Board of Governors, and the Post-  
7 master General on enhancing and protecting the  
8 provision of postal services to rural areas of the  
9 United States (referred to in this section as “rural  
10 postal services”); and

11 (2) foster innovative thinking to address the  
12 challenges facing the Postal Service in enhancing  
13 and protecting rural postal services.

14 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

15 (1) COMPOSITION.—The Advisory Commission  
16 shall be composed of 7 members, of whom—

17 (A) 3 members shall be appointed by the  
18 President, who shall designate 1 member ap-  
19 pointed under this subparagraph to serve as  
20 Chairperson of the Advisory Commission; and

21 (B) 1 member shall be appointed by each  
22 of—

23 (i) the majority leader of the Senate;

24 (ii) the minority leader of the Senate;

1 (iii) the Speaker of the House of Rep-  
2 resentatives; and

3 (iv) the minority leader of the House  
4 of Representatives.

5 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Advi-  
6 sory Commission shall have—

7 (A) recognized and significant experience  
8 in such fields as business, technology, and pub-  
9 lic administration;

10 (B) a documented record of innovative  
11 thinking;

12 (C) familiarity with new and emerging  
13 technologies;

14 (D) experience with rural areas of the  
15 United States; and

16 (E) experience with revitalizing and im-  
17 proving the morale of organizations, corpora-  
18 tions, or communities that have experienced sig-  
19 nificant financial challenges or other challenges.

20 (3) INCOMPATIBLE OFFICES.—An individual  
21 who is appointed to the Advisory Commission may  
22 not serve as an elected official or an officer or em-  
23 ployee of the Federal Government while serving as  
24 a member of the Advisory Commission, except in the

1 capacity of that individual as a member of the Advi-  
2 sory Commission.

3 (4) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—Each  
4 member of the Advisory Commission shall be ap-  
5 pointed not later than 60 days after the date of en-  
6 actment of this Act.

7 (5) MEETINGS; QUORUM; VACANCIES.—

8 (A) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Commis-  
9 sion shall meet at the call of the Chairperson or  
10 a majority of the members of the Advisory  
11 Commission.

12 (B) QUORUM.—Four members of the Advi-  
13 sory Commission shall constitute a quorum.

14 (C) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Advi-  
15 sory Commission shall not affect the powers of  
16 the Advisory Commission, but shall be filled as  
17 soon as practicable in the same manner in  
18 which the original appointment was made.

19 (d) DUTIES AND POWERS.—

20 (1) DUTIES.—The Advisory Commission  
21 shall—

22 (A) study matters that the Advisory Com-  
23 mission determines are necessary and appro-  
24 priate to improve and protect rural postal serv-  
25 ices and develop a strategic blueprint to im-

1           prove and protect rural postal services, includ-  
2           ing—

3                   (i) the financial, operational, and  
4                   structural condition of the Postal Service;

5                   (ii) alternative strategies and business  
6                   models that the Postal Service could adopt  
7                   that would improve and protect rural post-  
8                   al services;

9                   (iii) opportunities for additional postal  
10                   and nonpostal services that the Postal  
11                   Service could offer that would assist the  
12                   mission of the Postal Service in rural areas  
13                   of the United States;

14                   (iv) the comparative postal practices  
15                   of other countries in rural areas, including  
16                   innovative products and services that post-  
17                   al services in other countries have offered;

18                   (v) the governance and organizational  
19                   and management structures of the Postal  
20                   Service;

21                   (vi) efforts by the Postal Service to  
22                   recruit and retain a workforce in rural  
23                   areas that is capable of meeting the stra-  
24                   tegic needs of the Postal Service regarding

1 innovation, nationwide service standards,  
2 and nationwide delivery schedules;

3 (vii) the morale of the workforce of  
4 the Postal Service, including strategies to  
5 improve the morale of the workforce, with  
6 a focus on the workforce that serves rural  
7 areas; and

8 (viii) technology that could enhance  
9 and protect rural postal services; and

10 (B) submit the report required under sub-  
11 section (h).

12 (2) HEARINGS.—The Advisory Commission may  
13 hold such hearings, take such testimony, and receive  
14 such evidence as is necessary to carry out this sec-  
15 tion.

16 (3) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—The Advisory  
17 Commission may secure directly from the Postal  
18 Service, the Board of Governors, the Postal Regu-  
19 latory Commission, and any other Federal depart-  
20 ment or agency such information as the Advisory  
21 Commission considers necessary to carry out this  
22 section. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Ad-  
23 visory Commission, the head of the department or  
24 agency shall furnish the information described in the  
25 preceding sentence to the Advisory Commission.

1           (e) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—The Federal Advisory  
2 Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) and section 552a of title  
3 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Privacy  
4 Act of 1974”) shall apply to the Advisory Commission.

5           (f) ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

6               (1) POSTAL SERVICE.—The Postmaster General  
7 shall provide to the Advisory Commission adminis-  
8 trative support and other services for the perform-  
9 ance of the functions of the Advisory Commission.

10              (2) OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—An  
11 agency of the Federal Government may provide to  
12 the Advisory Committee such services, funds, facili-  
13 ties, staff, and other support services that the agen-  
14 cy determines to be advisable or is otherwise author-  
15 ized under law.

16           (g) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

17               (1) ADVISORY COMMISSION MEMBERS.—

18                   (A) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each  
19 member of the Advisory Commission shall be  
20 compensated at a rate equal to the daily equiva-  
21 lent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed  
22 for level IV of the Executive Schedule under  
23 section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for  
24 each day during which the member is engaged



1 in the actual performance of the duties of the  
2 Advisory Commission.

3 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of  
4 the Advisory Commission shall be allowed travel  
5 expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsist-  
6 ence, at the rate authorized for employees serv-  
7 ing intermittently in the Government service  
8 under section 5703 of title 5, United States  
9 Code, while away from home or regular place of  
10 business in the performance of services for the  
11 Advisory Commission.

12 (2) STAFF.—

13 (A) APPOINTMENT AND COMPENSATION.—  
14 The Chairperson, in accordance with rules  
15 agreed upon by the Advisory Commission, shall  
16 appoint and fix the compensation of an execu-  
17 tive director and such other personnel as may  
18 be necessary to enable the Advisory Commission  
19 to carry out the functions of the Advisory Com-  
20 mission, without regard to the provisions of title  
21 5, United States Code, governing appointments  
22 in the competitive service, and without regard  
23 to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter  
24 III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classi-  
25 fication of positions and General Schedule pay

1 rates, except that a rate of pay fixed under this  
2 subparagraph may not exceed the annual rate  
3 of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Execu-  
4 tive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5,  
5 United States Code.

6 (B) DETAILEES.—Any Federal employee,  
7 including an employee of the Postal Service,  
8 may be detailed to the Advisory Commission  
9 without reimbursement, and such detail shall be  
10 without interruption or loss of the civil service  
11 rights, status, or privilege of the employee.

12 (h) STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR RURAL POSTAL  
13 SERVICES.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 9 months  
15 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Advisory  
16 Commission shall submit a report that contains a  
17 strategic blueprint for rural postal services to—

18 (A) the President;

19 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security  
20 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

21 (C) the Committee on Oversight and Gov-  
22 ernment Reform of the House of Representa-  
23 tives;

24 (D) the Board of Governors; and

25 (E) the Postmaster General.

1           (2) CONTENTS.—The strategic blueprint con-  
2           tained in the report submitted under paragraph (1)  
3           shall include—

4                   (A) an assessment of the effectiveness of  
5                   the business model of the Postal Service for  
6                   protecting rural postal services as of the date  
7                   on which the report is submitted;

8                   (B) an assessment of potential future busi-  
9                   ness models for the Postal Service and the im-  
10                  pact of those business models on rural postal  
11                  services, including an evaluation of the impact  
12                  of—

13                           (i) reductions of service on revenue;

14                           and

15                           (ii) additional opportunities for  
16                           growth and revenue;

17                   (C) a strategy for addressing challenges  
18                   and costs in protecting rural postal services;

19                   (D) identification of opportunities for new  
20                   and innovative products and services that would  
21                   help protect and enhance rural postal services;

22                   (E) an enumeration of steps that the Post-  
23                   al Service needs to take to ensure that, 20  
24                   years after the date of enactment of this Act,

1 the Postal Service can continue to offer postal  
2 services in rural areas;

3 (F) a strategy for ensuring that the Postal  
4 Service has a sufficient workforce to comply  
5 with service standards for, and meet the needs  
6 of postal customers in, rural areas; and

7 (G) recommendations for any legislative  
8 changes necessary to implement the strategic  
9 blueprint described in this paragraph.

10 (i) **TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.**—The Advi-  
11 sory Commission shall terminate on the earlier of—

12 (1) the date that is 60 days after the date on  
13 which the Advisory Commission submits the report  
14 on the strategic blueprint for rural postal services  
15 under subsection (h); or

16 (2) the date that is 1 year after the date of en-  
17 actment of this Act.

18 (j) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There  
19 are authorized to be appropriated out of the Postal Service  
20 Fund a total of not more than \$3,000,000 for fiscal years  
21 2015 and 2016.

22 **SEC. 9. EQUIPPING DELIVERY VEHICLES FOR RURAL**  
23 **AREAS.**

24 (a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Con-  
25 gress that—

1           (1) while it may be too late for the Postal Serv-  
2           ice to consider rural mail delivery as part of its Next  
3           Generation Delivery Vehicles (commonly known as  
4           “NGDV”) initiative, the Postal Service should con-  
5           sider options for a rural delivery truck prototype in  
6           the future, as rural letter carriers currently must  
7           use their own vehicles due to the unique terrain  
8           challenges across the United States; and

9           (2) the Postal Service should consider the feasi-  
10          bility of equipping delivery vehicles that can not only  
11          handle the challenges described in paragraph (1),  
12          but can also handle severe weather conditions.

13          (b) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after the  
14          date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
15          of the United States shall—

16               (1) study the feasibility of the Postal Service  
17               designing mail delivery vehicles that are equipped for  
18               rural areas; and

19               (2) submit to Congress a report on the findings  
20               of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

21 **SEC. 10. WI-FI IN RURAL POST OFFICES.**

22          (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
23          gress that—

24               (1) because post offices still serve as a central  
25               point in many rural communities where people con-

1 gregate and connect with the rest of the world, the  
2 Postal Service should consider providing wireless  
3 broadband Internet access service at all rural post  
4 offices as a method of incentivizing individuals to  
5 use their community post office as much as possible;  
6 and

7 (2) because of the challenges that implementing  
8 wireless broadband Internet access service at all  
9 rural post offices would pose, the Postal Service  
10 should first consider implementing a pilot program  
11 under which the Postal Service would provide wire-  
12 less broadband Internet access service at 4 rural  
13 post offices in diverse areas of the United States for  
14 a 2-year period in order to determine whether the  
15 addition of such service in those post offices has an  
16 impact on the amount of business or revenue gen-  
17 erated by each post office.

18 (b) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after the  
19 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
20 of the United States shall—

21 (1) study the feasibility of the Postal Service  
22 providing wireless broadband Internet access service  
23 at all rural post offices; and

24 (2) submit to Congress a report on the findings  
25 of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

1 **SEC. 11. PROTECTION OF DOOR AND CURBSIDE DELIVERY.**

2 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

3 (1) the term “centralized delivery” means a pri-  
4 mary mode of mail delivery whereby mail is delivered  
5 to a group or cluster of mail receptacles at a single  
6 location;

7 (2) the term “curbside delivery” means a pri-  
8 mary mode of mail delivery whereby mail is delivered  
9 to a mail receptacle that is situated at the edge of  
10 a public sidewalk abutting a road or curb, at a road,  
11 or at a curb;

12 (3) the term “delivery point” means a mailbox  
13 or other receptacle to which mail is delivered;

14 (4) the term “door delivery”—

15 (A) means a primary mode of mail delivery  
16 whereby mail is—

17 (i) delivered to a mail receptacle at or  
18 near a postal customer’s door; or

19 (ii) hand-delivered to a postal cus-  
20 tomer; and

21 (B) does not include curbside or central-  
22 ized delivery; and

23 (5) the term “primary mode of mail delivery”  
24 means the typical method by which the Postal Serv-  
25 ice delivers mail to the delivery point of a postal cus-  
26 tomer.

1       (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
2 gress that the Postal Service should not convert existing  
3 residential or business addresses to centralized delivery  
4 from door delivery or curbside delivery.

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