



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

304 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

1200 AGUAJITO ROAD, SUITE 003
MONTEREY, CA 93940

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 318C
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

841 BLOSSOM HILL ROAD, SUITE 209
SAN JOSE, CA 95123

800 PINE STREET
PASO ROBLES, CA 93446

May 9, 2024

The Hon. Louis DeJoy
Chief Postal Inspector
475 L'Enfant Plaza West, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20260

The Hon. Gary R. Barksdale
Chief Postal Inspector
475 L'Enfant Plaza West, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy and Chief Inspector Barksdale:

I write to request your assistance resolving egregious mail theft taking place in the communities I represent in California's 19th Congressional District. I have heard from multiple constituents in Santa Clara County that criminals are using "arrow keys," the master keys providing access to multiple USPS-controlled mailboxes, to rapidly steal mail from cluster box units (CBUs). This is a widespread phenomenon, affecting communities across the country,¹ and one that is felt acutely by my constituents. I have also heard from the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) that your agencies are working to update CBUs with digital locks that will be less susceptible to theft. I respectfully request additional information about mail theft nationwide, steps you are taking to address this issue, and how you will prioritize high-theft areas like Santa Clara County in the rollout of new key technologies. In the meantime, I ask that you grant my constituents' requests to transfer mailboxes from a CBU design to individual curbside units.

In Santa Clara County, California, residents have been repeatedly victimized by coordinated, repeated mass mail theft. In the Yerba Buena Villas community, constituents have witnessed criminals unlocking their neighborhood CBU, clearing out mail from multiple individual boxes, and driving away with impunity. These constituents have repeatedly reached out to USPS, USPIS, and local law enforcement for assistance, but without additional security, the thefts have continued. Residents have been forced to upend their lives, staying home all day to wait for mail, coping with stolen financial documents and medicine, and living with the danger of repeat criminals brazenly operating in front of their homes.

Recognizing the immense task facing law enforcement, and the fact that officers cannot be everywhere at once, the community has asked USPS to convert from a CBU to individual

¹ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/02/23/mail-theft-united-states-postal-service-concerns/72703972007/>

curbside mailboxes, paid at residents' expense, as a means to deter theft. With mail separated into individual locked units, rather than a cluster of units that can be unlocked at once with a single key, criminals will be unable to quickly attack my constituents, and Yerba Buena will be a less-likely target for postal crime. The USPS has sole authority to grant this request; doing so would both address crime and contribute to the peace of mind and safety of my constituents.

Beyond this, I request that both USPS and USPIS prioritize communities Santa Clara County in the implementation of new physical security standards for CBUs, including the installation of electronic keys. High-theft areas have demonstrated their need for additional protections, and deserve to be addressed first as your agencies implement these new security standards.

Finally, I request that you provide more information about postal theft nationwide and the steps you are taking to address this epidemic, and commit to working with my office to update my constituents about your work and discuss potential legislative solutions to make the postal system safer and more secure for everyone.

For years, my constituents have been forced to live without one of our country's oldest and proudest traditions—access to a secure postal system. I ask that you work with my office and my community to address these concerns and ensure my constituents can once again rely on the postal system for safe, reliable mail delivery. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to address this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Panetta', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress