



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

JANESE LEWIS GEORGE
Councilmember, Ward 4

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Human Services
Labor and Workforce Development
Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs
Transportation and the Environment
Special Committee, COVID-19 Recovery

January 10, 2022

Edward Williamson
Postmaster, District of Columbia
United States Postal Service
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster Williamson:

I write to share my great concern with the quality of mail service in Ward 4 and throughout the District. I was pleased to learn that your office hired additional carrier assistants last year¹, but I remain alarmed that service remains far below acceptable levels. We need further action, particularly after last week's news that the USPS will soon begin delivering coronavirus test kits to households across the country².

Residents rely on the USPS to provide timely and reliable residential mail service. Dozens of residents have contacted my office about severe delays in mail delivery in communities across Ward 4. Ten days into 2022, many residents are still awaiting their first batch of mail for the new year. Many residents are getting pickup and delivery service just once a week and others wait even longer. While mail delivery issues were exacerbated by last week's snowstorm, they have gone on far longer and cannot just be attributed to inclement weather.

The Postal Service is responsible for getting essential items to and from people's homes six days per week. Ward 4 residents, particularly our senior citizens, rely on your help to receive life-saving medicine, to pay their bills, to file taxes, to secure government benefits, to receive their paycheck, and, for many, to cast a ballot. Residents also depend on mail to communicate with loved ones, stay informed on current events, and continue to be civically engaged amidst a pandemic that forces many to stay home to protect their health. I worry that many residents have lost faith that they will ever get consistent mail service again.

Our postal workers are heroes. They are committed public servants who work in difficult conditions on a daily basis to perform their duties, even amidst a disruptive pandemic. Ward 4 residents feel a profound sense of gratitude and a strong connection to the USPS workers who deliver their mail and staff USPS locations in our community. It is clear that additional resources

¹ Press Release: "Norton Receives USPS Response to Her Letter on Delayed & Undelivered Mail in All Eight D.C. Wards," published on September 13, 2021: <https://thedcline.org/2021/09/13/press-release-norton-receives-usps-response-to-her-letter-on-delayed-undelivered-mail-in-all-eight-d-c-wards/>

² "White House, USPS finalizing plans to begin shipping coronavirus test kits to U.S. households" published on January 6, 2022: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/01/06/biden-covid-tests-usps/>

are needed to address the COVID-related staffing issues that have impacted mail delivery and overburdened the current USPS workforce in Ward 4. We must do everything in our power to restore confidence and reliability.

Please provide an update on what steps your office is taking to improve service and communication in Ward 4 and throughout the District. Until service improves, I request that your office provide regular weekly updates from regional managers on any staffing shortages that are affecting delivery times to me and our ANC Commissioners so we can update the community. When staffing shortages among carriers are insurmountable and mail delivery is delayed, please indicate where residents can go to pick up their mail and help alleviate backlogs. Additionally, please include a direct email and phone number where residents can get in touch with your office to notify you of any ongoing concerns. I believe better communication can go a long way to improve trust and confidence in the system – despite ongoing delays in service.

I have been in communication with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, who has worked diligently on this issue and has written to you regarding significant mail delivery delays across the District. I am grateful for Representative Norton's leadership and attention to this matter on the federal level. I write to you today to expand on the urgency and severity of the crisis in our communities in Ward 4, which has only worsened in recent months.

Our residents depend on reliable USPS mail service and we are counting on your leadership to get back on track. Thank you for your partnership and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeese Lewis George". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Janeese Lewis George
Ward 4 Councilmember

Cc: The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton