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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

THESE HEADLINES FROM NEWSPAPERS SHOULD STRIKE FEAR IN YOU

Is this the America you want your children and grandchildren living in, were elected officials use such undermining tactics to win? So much about worrying whether Russia will interfere again!

HEADLINES

- “Trump Brags That He's Trying to Sabotage the Postal Service to Rig the Election”
- “Trump admits he's refusing to fund the Postal Service to stop mail-in voting”
- “A Catastrophe!': Postal Workers Warn Trump Sabotage of USPS Could Delay Mail-In Ballots and Distort Election”
- “Trump Just Admitted He's Sabotaging the USPS to Screw Up the Election”
- “Trump Admits He’s Starving the Postal Service to Sabotage Voting by Mail”

Trump's attack on U.S. Postal Service is 2020 election sabotage amid COVID-19. Be alarmed

USA TODAY© An article posted on line by USA Today © states with COVID-19 still surging throughout the nation, it is difficult to imagine what America will look like on Election Day, Nov. 3. But one thing is certain: Even if we've begun to get control of the virus by then, many Americans who are immunocompromised, elderly or simply unwilling to take the risk of contracting the virus will need to vote by mail to ensure their voices are heard in our democracy.

Every American should be deeply concerned by the Trump administration's recent politicization and sabotage of the United States Postal Service.

On May 7, during one of the deadliest weeks of the pandemic, Louis DeJoy was named as the nation's new postmaster general. DeJoy's primary qualification seems to have been that he donated over \$1.2 million to the Trump Victory Fund and ran the Republican National Convention's fundraising effort.

Since DeJoy took over the Postal Service, he has implemented a series of controversial and deeply damaging new policies that have slowed mail delivery across the country and raised the hackles of postal workers, rural elected officials and election advocates. On Friday, he reassigned 23 postal executives in a shakeup that included removing the two top Postal Service officials who oversaw day-to-day operations. These leadership shifts stand to turn the agency on its head and compromise its independence.

Mail voting since the Civil War

As the nation's 75th postmaster general (the first was Benjamin Franklin), DeJoy inherited one of America's most storied institutions, one established in the Constitution itself. During much of its history, the Postal Service has played a critical role in ensuring democracy's promise.

Civil War battlefields were the first test of America's vote-by-mail system. About 150,000 Union soldiers voted by mail and helped propel President Abraham Lincoln to a landslide reelection in 1864. Ever since, U.S. troops abroad have relied primarily on vote by mail to participate in our democracy, with many sending their ballots from war zones.

In recent decades, as states began to see the myriad advantages of vote by mail, more and more Americans have utilized this voting method. That includes many high-ranking Trump administration officials and President Donald Trump himself.

In the last presidential election, 33.6 million people — about 1 in 4 voters — voted by mail. If COVID-era primaries are any indication, that number will explode this November.

In Kentucky's June primary, for instance, absentee ballots accounted for 85% of all votes. In Michigan, more than three times as many voters have requested absentee ballots compared with the same period in 2016.

And this is all done with virtually no cases of voter fraud, contrary to the president's fulminations.

Start preparing: Our research shows what to do now to maximize election turnout and voter health amid COVID

Vote by mail has never been more critical to our democracy than during this pandemic. And the Postal Service has never been as politicized as it is today. That is a toxic, dangerous mix.

Trump has made his disdain for vote by mail well known. In April, he called the U.S. Postal Service a "joke" and stood in the

way of \$10 billion in aid that Congress approved as part of an earlier pandemic relief bill.

Trump has also made it clear he is willing to use the USPS for his own political ends. For instance, he has demanded that it jack up shipping rates on Amazon — whose CEO, Jeff Bezos, owns The Washington Post, which is often critical of Trump. And in hypocritical fashion, when it serves political objectives, he will promote vote by mail as he recently did for Florida voters.

Mail ballots could decide the winner

This is a democratic emergency. The outcome of the November presidential election will almost certainly be decided by mail-in votes. And with about two-thirds of states claiming they will not accept any mail-in ballots that arrive after Election Day, how those votes are handled once voters return their ballots is among the most consequential policy decisions of the 2020 election. Restrictive procedures in many states are being challenged in court by organizations that include mine, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Given its track record, we simply cannot trust the Trump administration to allow a free and fair election by mail. Congress must act now to protect the mechanisms and independence of the Postal Service.

Undermining trust: Trump and Barr are making false claims about mail-in ballots to scare us out of voting

In addition to allocating \$3.6 billion in funding for states to help them conduct elections by mail, as I recently urged in testimony before the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, Congress must conduct immediate oversight hearings to find out why Postmaster General DeJoy, who has as much as \$75 million invested in USPS competitors and contractors, already has eliminated or moved officials holding critical positions and imposed new policies that appear to undercut the agency's primary mission.

The Postal Service has been a thread connecting American communities since the nation's fragile early days. We have relied on it through wars, natural disasters and, yes, pandemics. This November election could be the Postal Service's most critical moment. We must ensure that — like snow, rain, heat and gloom of night — politics will not stop it from the swift completion of its appointed rounds.

View complete article at:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/10/stop-trump-attacks-postal-service-fair-covid-election-column/3329978001/>