



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

## **TRANSPORTATION LABOR CALLS FOR PROVISIONS TO PROTECT LETTER CARRIERS ON THE JOB**

Since the inception of the Postal Service nearly 250 years ago, letter carriers have delivered to every community on every street in the United States, rarely being the targets of violence. In recent years, that has changed.

Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 crimes committed against letter carriers on the job. Many of these attacks involve a gun or another weapon. Tragically, since 2022, four letter carriers have been murdered while dutifully doing their jobs.

Letter carrier robberies climbed to 643 in 2023, an increase of nearly 30 percent, and the number of robberies resulting in injuries doubled, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).

This is a growing problem nationwide, and these violent crimes and assaults are heartbreaking and completely unacceptable. **We call on Congress to pass the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7029/4356), which would deter these crimes from happening and keep letter carriers safer as they deliver essential mail and packages to every community in the country.**

The Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) would deter these crimes by:

- devaluing key infrastructure with more secure electronic versions
- increasing federal prosecution rates for these crimes
- standardizing sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes

### **Secure, replace and devalue postal infrastructure**

POLCA would provide \$7 billion in funding for the Postal Service to secure its infrastructure, including the installation of high-security collection boxes as well as the replacement of items carried by letter carriers with more secure electronic versions. A recent audit of USPIS data found that 52 percent of robberies of a letter carrier involved the theft of postal infrastructure items that have become highly sought after on the black market in recent years. Similarly, the Postal Service has reported an increase in high-volume mail theft incidents from mail receptacles, including blue collection boxes.

In response, the Postal Service has begun to reinforce its infrastructure, which includes items carried by letter carriers on the job. The bill would provide the necessary funding to implement this updated technology nationwide. When key infrastructure is devalued and more secure, letter carriers will be safer on their routes.

### **Increase prosecution rates**

Alarming, while crimes against letter carriers have persisted, arrests and prosecution against the alleged perpetrators have not. Though the number of assaults and robberies against letter carriers has doubled in recent years, the number of arrests and convictions for these crimes has markedly decreased, according to USPIS. Due to workload and other priorities, these cases often sit on district attorneys' desks, are not federally prosecuted, and the alleged assailants are not held accountable. POLCA would require the Attorney General to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney in each judicial district to prioritize any case that involves an assault or crime against a letter carrier.

### **Harsher sentencing for robbery and assault of a letter carrier**

Even though letter carriers who are victims of these crimes are federal employees in uniform on the job, under current law, the sentencing guidelines for those found guilty of these crimes are overly weak and permissive. In 2024, a San Francisco defendant was found guilty of robbing a letter carrier at gunpoint and sentenced to only 30 days imprisonment, while in Mississippi a defendant was sentenced to eight years. This bill would strengthen sentencing guidelines for these crimes, ensuring that they are treated in the same manner as assaults on federal law enforcement officers.

**Americans depend on the more than 200,000 active city letter carriers to deliver medications, checks, ballots, packages, and other mail. America's letter carriers must be safe and protected while they perform their essential duties.**

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