



Can the Postal Service End Saturday Delivery without Congressional Approval?

Congress has expressed its support for Saturday mail for three decades, requiring six-day delivery by law – a decision they reaffirm almost annually because Saturday mail matters a great deal to U.S. citizens and businesses. But now, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe says he's found a loophole that allows him to bypass the will of Congress and end six-day delivery.

Congress' clear intention has been to keep the Postal Service delivering for America six days a week.

In fact, a recent legal opinion issued by the Government Accountability Office, an independent and nonpartisan investigative agency, concluded that the Postal Service is bound by current law to continue six-day delivery. The GAO found no language in the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution to indicate that Congress wanted to alter the current operational status quo. The report noted that the attempt to cut Saturday delivery rests on a "faulty USPS premise."

Despite the postmaster general's "claims" otherwise, Saturday delivery is still the law. Donahoe's efforts to pre-empt the authority of Congress to set postal policy – despite thirty years of evidence to the contrary and the new GAO analysis – have no legislative authority.

Changes of this magnitude, which would impact every single citizen and hurt the Postal Service's profitability as well, should be deliberately considered and decided upon as part of a comprehensive reform package, not pushed forward by someone looking for ways to circumvent the law.

Both the current postmaster general and his immediate predecessor have repeatedly accepted Congress' authority on Saturday delivery and have acknowledged that Congress must approve any change to the mail delivery schedule, which makes the Postal Service's decision to ignore Congress now even more incredulous.

"Portions of the Plan to Profitability require targeted legislative changes ... Strategies that require enactment of legislation include the ability of the Postal Service plan to transition to a five-day per week delivery model."

– *Statement by Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe before the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy, March 2012*

"Congress must act ... [to] grant the Postal Service the authority to determine delivery frequency."

– *Statement by Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, September 2011*

"Any change in the number of delivery days will require Congress to eliminate the appropriations language that mandates six-day-a-week delivery."

– *Statement by Postmaster General John E. Potter before the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security, April 2010*

"The Postal Service is fully aware that before a change in the number of delivery days could be adopted, legislative action would be required by Congress to amend the appropriations language that mandates six-day a week delivery."

– *Statement by Postmaster General John E. Potter before the Senate Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, March 2010*