



Save U.S. Postal Service

03/17/2012 11:10:11 PM MDT

To the editor:

Like most Americans, I value and depend on our U.S. Postal Service. It provides great service for a minimal price, and our local postal workers go out of their way to be helpful.

Our Postal Service is currently facing bankruptcy and planning for drastic cut-backs unless Congress acts quickly to relieve its financial situation.

The emergency it faces is completely unnecessary.

Its primary cause is a section of the 2006 Postal Act which required the USPS to prefund 50 years of retiree health benefits, front-loaded for the first 10 years at an average rate of about \$5.6 billion per year. (This is in addition to paying health benefits for current retirees.) Even the conservative Cato Institute has noted that "prefunding health benefits is unique to the USPS within the public sector and it is not required in the private sector."

Apparently the USPS has also been overfunding its payments to the Federal Employee's Retirement System for many years.

To protect and preserve our Postal Service, Congress needs to remove the ridiculous prepayment requirement and allow the Postal Service to use the accumulated funds from both overpayments to pay for retiree health care and retirement benefits in the normal way.

The Postal Service has immensely improved its efficiency but still has a structural deficit in one area: postal delivery. Its legal obligation to deliver to every address in the country becomes increasingly costly per letter as Internet use reduces first-class mail volume.

Congress could help with this problem also. I see two alternative solutions: 1) a federal subsidy for first-class mail; or 2) allowing the Postal Service to subsidize first-class mail itself by expanding its currently restricted ability to market a wider range of competitive and profitable products.

Congress needs to overcome its deadlock and fix this situation immediately. I urge your readers to contact our congressman and senators and tell them to get on the stick and save our postal system now, while there is still time. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Frances Moore

Loveland