

The Blog

Addressing the failures of USPS

Keith Balmer, General Registrar

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This is the speech delivered by the Registrar during Wednesday night's townhall with Commonwealth Attorney Colette McEachin and Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan.

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Thank you all for joining us this evening. As the General Registrar for Richmond, Virginia, it is my duty to address the concerns that many of our residents have regarding the recent failures in mail delivery by the United States Postal Service (USPS). The reports we've been receiving about delayed, misplaced, or even missing mail are deeply troubling, especially as we approach crucial electoral events like the Presidential Election in November.

I want to start by acknowledging the frustrations shared by many of you regarding the reliability of our mail service. From critical documents like absentee ballots to essential bills and important correspondences, the failure to deliver has undoubtedly caused inconvenience and anxiety among our community members.

I'm here this evening not just to acknowledge these issues, but to provide practical solutions to ensure that every eligible voter in Richmond can exercise their right to vote without hindrance. It's imperative that we safeguard our democratic process, and in light of the challenges posed by USPS's delivery failures, I urge all voters who have requested or received an absentee ballot for the current Presidential Primary to consider alternative methods of submission.

To address these concerns and mitigate potential voter disenfranchisement, I strongly recommend bypassing USPS and utilizing one of the three drop boxes located in the city for ballot submission. These drop boxes are conveniently located at my office on Laburnum Avenue, Hickory Hill Community Center, and City Hall. By directly submitting your ballot to these drop boxes, you can ensure that your vote is securely and promptly delivered to my office.

For those who have yet to receive their requested ballot or are fearful that their submitted ballot may not reach us in time, I want to assure you that alternative voting options are available. You can visit an Early Voting location in the city, where you'll be assisted in filling out a legally required form and casting your ballot on the machine. Alternatively, you can wait until Election Day and cast a provisional ballot at your designated polling location.

I understand that these issues extend beyond mere inconvenience; they represent a fundamental threat to our democracy. That's why my office is taking proactive steps to address the anticipated surge in absentee requests for the upcoming Presidential election. We will be sending out a comprehensive voter guide to every registered voter this summer, providing essential information about voting dates, times, locations, and the candidates on the ballot. Additionally, we will include a strong advocacy for utilizing the drop boxes as a secure means of ballot submission.

We must also be mindful of voters facing unique challenges, such as the elderly in nursing homes, individuals with mobility issues, and our overseas voters, including our military personnel stationed abroad. It's our duty to ensure that every voice is heard, regardless of circumstance, and I am committed to working tirelessly to uphold the integrity of our electoral process.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my unwavering commitment to ensuring fair and accessible elections for all residents of Richmond. Despite the challenges posed by the USPS's delivery failures, we will not waver in our efforts to protect the democratic rights of our community members. Together, we will navigate through these challenges and emerge stronger as a community.