

ROBERT E. LATTA

5TH DISTRICT, OHIO

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICAN LEADER

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December 15, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight & Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight & Reform
2105 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney and Ranking Member Comer:

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in serving the American people and for your leadership in the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

As leaders of the House's chief investigative committee, I am writing to request a formal Congressional inquiry into the mail processing operations of the USPS Michigan Metroplex facility in Pontiac, Michigan and the feasibility of transferring the processing duties for Northwest Ohio's mail from the Metroplex to one of the available processing facilities in the State of Ohio. For too long, the Michigan Metroplex has failed in its duty to provide adequate mail processing services for my constituents in Northwest Ohio and I believe Congress must intervene.

After the 2012 closure of the Toledo Mail Processing Plant due to consolidation efforts by the United States Postal Service (USPS), a new system was arranged where mail from Northwest Ohio was to be sent to the Michigan Metroplex for processing and sorting, before heading to its destination. Unfortunately, this arrangement has produced countless delays in mail delivery, lost or discarded mail pieces, and other failures. Consequentially, the lack of dependable mail delivery services has resulted in late billing payments and penalties for constituents, delays in local judicial proceedings, reputational and monetary harm to small businesses, and the violation of the right to vote, to name a few. I have tried to bring these concerns to the attention of USPS officials, including in Michigan, Northern Ohio, and Washington, D.C., with the hope that they could be addressed and remedied; unfortunately, the responses I have received over the years have been mixed at best.

Since 2016, I have tried to work with the USPS to get answers as to why these delays continue to occur and if the Postal Service could improve the operations at the Michigan Metroplex. I received assurances that the Postal Service took these matters seriously and were working to improve operations. Sadly, even with these assurances, I continued to receive a constant stream of complaints from my constituents about mail delivery issues.

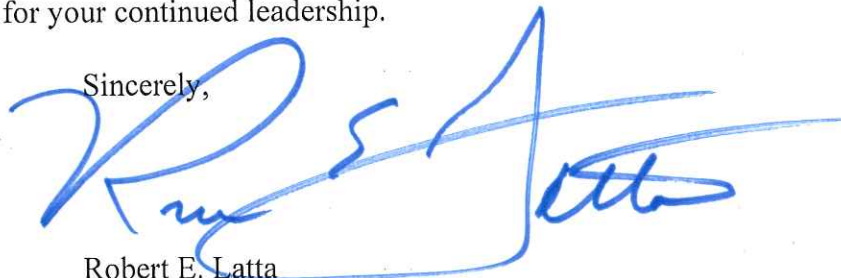
More recently, due to these ongoing concerns and with the 2020 Presidential Election approaching, I requested that the USPS have Northwest Ohio's mail, including absentee ballots, remain in the state

for processing at the Cleveland Mail Processing Plant instead of the Michigan Metroplex Facility. I was grateful to USPS for granting this request for the time period between September 16 and November 14, 2020. During this period, constituents in my district observed noticeable improvements in the delivery of their mail and we did not see a repeat of 2016 when hundreds of absentee ballots were lost.

With the evidence showing a reduction in errors for mail processed outside of the Metroplex and delivered within Northwest Ohio, I have called on the USPS to make the switch permanent, where the sorting and processing of mail originating from and bound for Northwest Ohio would be handled within the State of Ohio. I attempted to set up a conference call with officials from USPS to make this request but was told that no one would speak with me so that I could relay the will of my constituents. This is gravely concerning because it indicates to me and to my constituents that USPS officials are not serious about hearing and addressing our concerns, nor do they believe that they should be accountable to America's elected representatives.

Therefore, on behalf of my constituents in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Oversight and Reform launch an investigation into this matter and work to ensure that USPS is being proactive in addressing mail delivery issues brought forward by Members of Congress. Thank you again for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Latta', with a large, sweeping flourish extending across the page.

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress