

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6143

MAJORITY (202) 225–6074  
MINORITY (202) 225–6051  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 30, 2026

The Honorable David Steiner  
Postmaster General  
U.S. Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General Steiner:

I am concerned about the United States Postal Service’s (Postal Service) recent proposed rule, “Revised Mailing Standards for Firearms.”<sup>1</sup> The rule details the Postal Service’s plans to handle firearm shipments that, if implemented, would threaten public safety. The proposed rule would undermine a sensible firearm safety law, 18 U.S. Code § 1715, that has been in place for 99 years.<sup>2</sup> Section 1715 has effectively helped reduce illegal handgun trafficking by restricting the conditions under which concealable firearms can be shipped through the Postal Service. Preventing enforcement of this law would enable criminals to acquire concealable guns more easily, bypassing federal background checks and relevant state firearm laws. As Congress continues its oversight responsibilities, I am investigating the impact of any changes to federal firearm policies—particularly those that could affect interstate distribution channels and lead to criminal diversion.

This year the Department of Justice’s Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) opined that the 99-year-old federal prohibition on mailing handguns through the Postal Service is unconstitutional and directed federal prosecutors to stop enforcing Section 1715.<sup>3</sup> This memo flies in the face of more than 50 years of Supreme Court precedent, which has upheld the constitutionality of Section 1715.<sup>4</sup> The memo further advised the Postal Service to modify its regulations even though the Postal Service is not bound by OLC opinions. Without conducting any legal analysis of its own, the Postal Service is proposing regulatory changes that would permit the shipment and delivery of handguns by mail.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Postal Service, *Revised Mailing Standards for Firearms*, 91 Fed. Reg. 16601 (Apr. 2, 2026) (proposed rule).

<sup>2</sup> 18 U.S. Code § 1715.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, *Constitutionality of 18 U.S.C. § 1715* (Jan. 15, 2026) (online at [www.justice.gov/olc/media/1423701/dl](http://www.justice.gov/olc/media/1423701/dl)).

<sup>4</sup> *United States v. Powell*, 423 U.S. 87 (1975).

<sup>5</sup> United States Postal Service, *Revised Mailing Standards for Firearms*, 91 Fed. Reg. 16601 (Apr. 2, 2026) (proposed rule); See also *AG Jennings Intervenes in USPS Case That Would Allow Guns to Be Mailed with Virtually*

This proposed rule raises serious public safety and oversight concerns. Handguns are the most common firearms traced to crimes.<sup>6</sup> Twelve states, including the District of Columbia, require handgun shipments to be conducted through a licensed dealer (Federal Firearms Licensee, or FFL).<sup>7</sup> In states with the strongest gun safety laws, a staggering number of firearms are illegally trafficked in from other states.<sup>8</sup> If the Postal Service alters its rules consistent with the OLC memo by allowing handguns to be mailed through the Postal Service, criminals will have a significantly easier time evading law enforcement to conduct their illicit activities.

Considering the potential impacts on public safety, law enforcement, and postal workers, I seek additional details on how the Postal Service plans to operationalize and enforce this proposed rule, if it is implemented. Please provide a response to the following questions no later than May 14, 2026:

1. What security protocols will be in place to prevent the theft of firearm packages?
2. Given the rise in mail theft and “arrow key” robberies, what additional security protocols will the Postal Service implement to prevent thieves and criminal networks from seizing firearm packages?
3. Does the Postal Service have technology in place to distinguish between “mailable” and “nonmailable” firearms as defined in the proposed rule?
4. How will the Postal Service ensure compliance with state laws that require all handgun transfers to go through an FFL?
5. To what extent has the Postal Service assessed the potential impact of mailing handguns on the safety of postal workers who may handle a significantly higher volume of handgun packages?
6. How will the Postal Service align the proposed rule with the prohibition on interstate firearms transfers by non-FFLs under 18 U.S. Code § 922(a)(5)?

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*No Limits*, Delaware News (Mar. 3, 2026) (online at <https://news.delaware.gov/2026/03/03/ag-jennings-intervenes-in-usps-case-that-would-allow-guns-to-be-mailed-with-virtually-no-limits/>).

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *U.S. Firearm Types Recovered and Traced* (2023) (online at [www.atf.gov/resource-center/data-statistics/firearms-trace-data-reports?search\\_api\\_fulltext=&field\\_trace\\_data\\_location\\_parents=All&field\\_trace\\_data\\_location\\_children=All&field\\_report\\_end\\_date=+2023](http://www.atf.gov/resource-center/data-statistics/firearms-trace-data-reports?search_api_fulltext=&field_trace_data_location_parents=All&field_trace_data_location_children=All&field_report_end_date=+2023)) (accessed Apr. 29, 2026).


<sup>7</sup> The states are: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Firearms Trace Data Reports* (online at [www.atf.gov/resource-center/data-statistics/firearms-trace-data-reports?search\\_api\\_fulltext=&field\\_trace\\_data\\_location\\_parents=All&field\\_trace\\_data\\_location\\_children=All&field\\_report\\_end\\_date=+2023](http://www.atf.gov/resource-center/data-statistics/firearms-trace-data-reports?search_api_fulltext=&field_trace_data_location_parents=All&field_trace_data_location_children=All&field_report_end_date=+2023)) (accessed Apr. 29, 2026).

7. What safeguards will the Postal Service put in place to prevent shipments of handguns to people who are prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms under either state or federal laws?
8. How does the Postal Service plan to maintain or enhance the traceability of packages containing firearms and key components?
9. To what extent has the Postal Service consulted the Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and law enforcement stakeholders in development of the proposed rule?
10. How does the Postal Service safeguard against shipping loaded firearms?

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Oversight Committee) is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. The Oversight Committee has legislative authority over the “Postal service generally, including transportation of the mails.”<sup>9</sup> If you have any questions about this request, please contact Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



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Maxwell Frost  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and  
Regulatory Affairs

cc: The Honorable Eric Burlison, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and  
Regulatory Affairs

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<sup>9</sup> House Rule X, clause (1)(n)(9).