

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Inspector General Whitcomb:

We are writing to urge you to investigate numerous reports of absentee ballots not being delivered in a timely manner for the Wisconsin primary election held on Tuesday, April 7th. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an unprecedented increase in requests for absentee ballots, as more and more voters sought to comply with public health guidance and avoid potential risk to their health by avoiding in-person voting. The United States Postal Service (USPS) in short, had an outsized role in ensuring Wisconsinites could safely exercise the right to vote and participate in our democracy.

Unfortunately, there have been numerous accounts from the state that USPS failed to fulfill that critical function for some voters. According to an April 8th report by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the account of a state legislator, three tubs of absentee ballots from Appleton and Oshkosh were discovered in USPS's Milwaukee processing center after polls closed on Tuesday.¹ In addition, the City of Milwaukee Election Commission has requested that USPS investigate the failure of batches of absentee ballots requested on March 22nd and 23rd to be delivered to voters. Finally, the Village of Fox Point reports that USPS returned to them multiple batches of unsent absentee ballots and they were unable to obtain an explanation from their local post office as to why they were not delivered to the voters who requested them.

We are concerned there may be more examples, and request that you promptly open an investigation to determine the cause of these failures, which appear to have disenfranchised many Wisconsin voters. As the COVID-19 crisis continues and as more voters are likely to

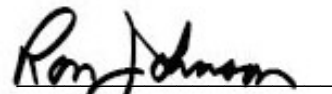
¹ Patrick Marley, Alison Dirr and Mary Spicuzza, "Wisconsin is discovering problems with absentee ballots, including hundreds that were never delivered," Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, April 8, 2020, available at www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/04/08/wisconsin-election-3-tubs-ballots-found-mail-processing-center/2971078001/.

request to vote by mail where available, this year's forthcoming elections will require that USPS's existing vote-by-mail procedures are strictly and effectively followed. It is critical that you quickly identify what has gone wrong and propose solutions that USPS can swiftly implement.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator