

CHAPTER 1—POSTAL POLICY AND DEFINITIONS

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§ 101. Postal policy

(a) The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by Act of Congress, and supported by the people. The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities. The costs of establishing and maintaining the Postal Service shall not be apportioned to impair the overall value of such service to the people.

(b) The Postal Service shall maintain an integrated network for the delivery of market-dominant and competitive products (as defined in chapter 36 of this title). Delivery shall occur at least six days a week, except during weeks that include a Federal holiday, in emergency situations, such as natural disasters, or in geographic areas where the Postal Service has established a policy of delivering mail fewer than six days a week as of the date of enactment of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022. The Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining. No small post office shall be closed solely for operating at a deficit, it being the specific intent of the Congress that effective postal services be insured to residents of both urban and rural communities.

(c) As an employer, the Postal Service shall achieve and maintain compensation for its officers and employees comparable to the rates and types of compensation paid in the private sector of the economy of the United States. It shall place particular emphasis upon opportunities for career advancements of all officers and employees and the achievement of worthwhile and satisfying careers in the service of the United States.

(d) Postal rates shall be established to apportion the costs of all postal operations to all users of the mail on a fair and equitable basis.

(e) In determining all policies for postal services, the Postal Service shall give the highest consideration to the requirement for the most expeditious collection, transportation, and delivery of important letter mail.

(f) In selecting modes of transportation, the Postal Service shall give highest consideration to the prompt, economical, consistent, and reliable delivery of all mail in a manner that increases operational efficiency and reduces complexity. Modern methods of transporting mail by containerization and programs designed to achieve cost-effective overnight transportation to the destination of important letter mail to all parts of the Nation shall also be a primary goal of postal operations.

(g) In planning and building new postal facilities, the Postal Service shall emphasize the need for facilities and equipment designed to create desirable working conditions for its officers and employees, a maximum degree of convenience for efficient postal services, proper access to existing and future air and surface transportation facilities, and control of costs to the Postal Service.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 719; Pub. L. 110-405, §2(b)(9), Oct. 13, 2008, 122 Stat. 4289; Pub. L. 117-108, title II, §§202(a), 208, Apr. 6, 2022, 136 Stat. 1146, 1151.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of enactment of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, referred to in subsec. (b), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 117-108, which was approved Apr. 6, 2022.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 117-108, §202(a), inserted “The Postal Service shall maintain an integrated network for the delivery of market-dominant and competitive products (as defined in chapter 36 of this title). Delivery shall occur at least six days a week, except during weeks that include a Federal holiday, in emergency situations, such as natural disasters, or in geographic areas where the Postal Service has established a policy of delivering mail fewer than six days a week as of the date of enactment of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022.” before “The Postal Service shall provide”.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 117-108, §208, substituted “prompt, economical, consistent, and reliable delivery of all mail in a manner that increases operational efficiency and reduces complexity” for “prompt and economical delivery of all mail” and inserted “cost-effective” after “to achieve” and “also” after “Nation shall”.

2008—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 110-405 substituted “mail.” for “mail and shall make a fair and equitable distribution of mail business to carriers providing similar modes of transportation services to the Postal Service.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 110-405, §2(c), Oct. 13, 2008, 122 Stat. 4290, provided that: “The amendments made by this section [amending this section, sections 3401 and 5402 of this title, and sections 41901 to 41904 and 41910 of Title 49, Transportation, renumbering former sections 41906, 41909, 41910, and 41912 of Title 49 as sections 41905, 41906, 41907, and 41908 of Title 49, respectively, and repealing former sections 41905, 41907, 41908, and 41911 of Title 49] shall take effect on October 1, 2008.”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 20, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-10 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding this section.

SHORT TITLE OF 2022 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 117-127, §1, May 16, 2022, 136 Stat. 1209, provided that: “This Act [enacting and amending provisions set out as notes under section 416 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2021’.”

Pub. L. 117-108, §1(a), Apr. 6, 2022, 136 Stat. 1127, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Postal Service Reform Act of 2022’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2015 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 114-99, §1, Dec. 11, 2015, 129 Stat. 2201, provided that: “This Act [amending section 414 of this title] may

be cited as the ‘Breast Cancer Research Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2015.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2014 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 113-165, §1, Sept. 19, 2014, 128 Stat. 1878, provided that: “This Act [amending provisions set out as a note under section 416 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2013.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111-155, §1, Apr. 7, 2010, 124 Stat. 1112, provided that: “This Act [amending section 3001 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Prevent Deceptive Census Look Alike Mailings Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 110-405, §1, Oct. 13, 2008, 122 Stat. 4287, provided that: “This Act [amending this section, sections 3401 and 5402 of this title, and sections 41901 to 41904 and 41910 of Title 49, Transportation, renumbering former sections 41906, 41909, 41910, and 41912 of Title 49 as sections 41905, 41906, 41907, and 41908 of Title 49, respectively, repealing former sections 41905, 41907, 41908, and 41911 of Title 49, and enacting provisions set out as a note under this section] may be cited as the ‘Air Carriage of International Mail Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109-435, §1(a), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3198, provided that: “This Act [see Tables for classification] may be cited as the ‘Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2004 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-447, div. J, title III, §301(a), Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3350, provided that: “This title [amending section 5402 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Rural Air Service Improvement Act of 2004.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2003 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-86, §1, Sept. 30, 2003, 117 Stat. 1052, provided that: “This Act [amending section 1004 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 1004 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Postmasters Equity Act of 2003.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 107-206, title III, §3002(a), Aug. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 910, provided that: “This title [amending section 5402 of this title, section 2703 of Title 19, Customs Duties, section 1626 of Title 43, Public Lands, and section 41901 of Title 49, Transportation, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 5402 of this title, section 112 of Title 1, General Provisions, and sections 2703 and 3203 of Title 19] may be cited as the ‘Rural Service Improvement Act of 2002.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2001 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 107-67, title VI, §650(a), Nov. 12, 2001, 115 Stat. 556, provided that: “This section [amending section 414 of this title and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 414 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Breast Cancer Research Stamp Act of 2001.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 2000 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 106-253, §1, July 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 634, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 416 of this title, amending section 414 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 414 and 416 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Semipostal Authorization Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 1998 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 105-241, §1, Sept. 28, 1998, 112 Stat. 1572, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 415 of this title and amending sections 404 and 3622 of this title, section

7902 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees, and sections 652 and 668 of Title 29, Labor] may be cited as the ‘Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 105-41, §1, Aug. 13, 1997, 111 Stat. 1119, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 414 of this title and provisions set out as a note under section 414 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Stamp Out Breast Cancer Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 1993 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 103-123, title VII, §701(a), Oct. 28, 1993, 107 Stat. 1267, provided that: “This title [enacting section 3642 of this title, amending sections 410, 2401, 3202, 3601, 3625 to 3627, and 3683 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 2401, 3621, 3626, and 3683 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Revenue Forgone Reform Act.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 94-421, §1, Sept. 24, 1976, 90 Stat. 1303, provided: “That this Act [amending sections 404, 2003, 2401, 3601, 3604, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3626, 3641, and 3683 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 404, 3601, 3624, 3641, and 3661 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Postal Reorganization Act Amendments of 1976.’”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 91-375, §1, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 719, provided: “That this Act [revising this title, enacting sections 1735 to 1737 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, amending section 356 of Title 2, The Congress, section 19 of Title 3, The President, sections 101, 104, 2104, 2105, 3104, 3304a, 4301, 5102, 5303, 5304, 5312, 5314 to 5316, 5541, 6301, 6323, 7101, and 8344 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees, sections 24 seventh par., 1701d-3, and 1701e of Title 12, Banks and Banking, section 637 of Title 15, Commerce and Trade, section 4601-1 of Title 16, Conservation, section 8 of former Title 17, Copyrights, sections 12, 440, 441, 500, 501, 612, 876, 877, 1114, 1303, 1341, 1342, 1463, 1696, 1699, 1703, 1704, 1707, 1709 to 1713, 1715, 1716, 1716A, 1717, 1718, 1721 to 1725, 1729, 1730, 1733, and 3061 of Title 18, section 611 of Title 22, Foreign Relations and Intercourse, sections 72 fifth par., 129, and 724a of former Title 31, Money and Finance, sections 356, 474, 615, 723, and 724 of former Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works, and section 2942 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, repealing section 3327 of Title 5 and section 1028 of former Title 31, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and sections 201, 601, 1001, 1003, 1201, 2002, 2004, 3010, and 3621 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Postal Reorganization Act.’”

SEVERABILITY

RULE OF CONSTRUCTION

Pub. L. 117-108, title II, §202(b), Apr. 6, 2022, 136 Stat. 1147, provided that: “Nothing in subsection (a) [amending this section] or the amendment made by such subsection is intended to alter or amend the requirements of chapters 20 or 36 of title 39, United States Code, and related implementing regulations, including provisions relating to costing, accounting, or rates.”

COVID-19 FUNDING FOR THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Pub. L. 116-136, div. A, title VI, §6001, Mar. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 504, as amended by Pub. L. 116-260, div. N, title VIII, §801, Dec. 27, 2020, 134 Stat. 2119, provided that:

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

“(1) the term ‘COVID-19 emergency’ means the emergency involving Federal primary responsibility determined to exist by the President under section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)) with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); and

“(2) the term ‘Postal Service’ means the United States Postal Service.

“(b) ADDITIONAL BORROWING AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding section 2005 of title 39, United States Code, or any other provision of law, if the Postal Service determines that, due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Postal Service will not be able to fund operating expenses without borrowing money—

“(1) the Postal Service may borrow money from the Treasury in an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000,000—

“(A) to be used for such operating expenses; and

“(B) which may not be used to pay any outstanding debt of the Postal Service; and

“(2) the Secretary of the Treasury may lend up to the amount described in paragraph (1) at the request of the Postal Service, upon terms and conditions mutually agreed upon by the Secretary and the Postal Service.

“(c) NO REPAYMENT REQUIRED.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including subsection (b) of this section, or any agreement entered into between the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postal Service under that subsection, the Postal Service shall not be required to repay the amounts borrowed under that subsection.

“(d) PRIORITIZATION OF DELIVERY FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during the COVID-19 emergency, the Postal Service—

“(1) shall prioritize delivery of postal products for medical purposes; and

“(2) may establish temporary delivery points, in such form and manner as the Postal Service determines necessary, to protect employees of the Postal Service and individuals receiving deliveries from the Postal Service.”

§ 102. Definitions

As used in this title—

(1) “Postal Service” means the United States Postal Service established by section 201 of this title;

(2) “Board of Governors”, and “Board”, unless the context otherwise requires, mean the Board of Governors established under section 202 of this title;

(3) “Governors” means the 9 members of the Board of Governors appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, under section 202(a) of this title;

(4) “Inspector General” means the Inspector General appointed under section 202(e) of this title;

(5) “postal service” refers to the delivery of letters, printed matter, or mailable packages, including acceptance, collection, sorting, transportation, or other functions ancillary thereto;

(6) “product” means a postal service with a distinct cost or market characteristic for which a rate or rates are, or may reasonably be, applied;

(7) “rates”, as used with respect to products, includes fees for postal services;

(8) “market-dominant product” or “product in the market-dominant category of mail” means a product subject to subchapter I of chapter 36;

(9) “competitive product” or “product in the competitive category of mail” means a product subject to subchapter II of chapter 36; and

(10) “year”, as used in chapter 36 (other than subchapters I and VI thereof), means a fiscal year.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 720; Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title I, §101(f) [title VI,

§ 662(a)(2)], Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-314, 3009-379; Pub. L. 109-435, title I, §101, Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3199.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Pars. (5) to (10). Pub. L. 109-435 added pars. (5) to (10).

1996—Par. (4). Pub. L. 104-208 added par. (4).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-9 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

CHAPTER 2—ORGANIZATION

Sec. 201.	United States Postal Service.
202.	Board of Governors.
203.	Postmaster General; Deputy Postmaster General.
204.	General Counsel; Judicial Officer; Chief Postal Inspector.
205.	Procedures of the Board of Governors.
206.	Advisory Council.
207.	Seal.
208.	Reservation of powers.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1996—Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title I, §101(f) [title VI, § 662(f)(2)(B)], Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-314, 3009-383, in item 204 substituted “General Counsel; Judicial Officer; Chief Postal Inspector” for “Assistant Postmasters General; General Counsel; Judicial Officer”.

§ 201. United States Postal Service

There is established, as an independent establishment of the executive branch of the Government of the United States, the United States Postal Service.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 720.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-9 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS; ABOLITION OF OFFICE

Pub. L. 91-375, § 4(a), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 773, provided that: “There are hereby transferred to the United States Postal Service all the functions, powers, and duties of the Post Office Department and the Postmaster General of the Post Office Department, and the Post Office Department and the office of Postmaster General of the Post Office Department are abolished.”

Provisions of section 4(a) of Pub. L. 91-375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service and published by it in the Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of this title.

INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title I, §101(f) [title VI, § 662(e)], Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-314, 3009-382, provided that: