The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

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The Leadership Conference

September 23, 2011

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to you concerning the United States Postal Service's (USPS) Sept. 15 announcement that it intends to make major changes to its mail processing network. Over the next three months USPS will study 252 mail processing facilities for possible consolidation or closure. The Postal Service estimates that 35,000 jobs will be lost as a part of this initiative.

We are very concerned that a disproportionate number of communities of color will be adversely impacted by these closures, at a time when the unemployment rate for African Americans sits at 16.7 percent and 11.3 percent for Hispanics. The mail processing facilities to be studied include a significant number of facilities in major urban areas, including Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, Detroit, Brooklyn, and Dallas, all of which have high populations of communities of color.

Yesterday, the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service, and Labor Policy held a markup of H.R. 2309, the Postal Reform Act. We understand the bill will come before the full Committee in two weeks. As a part of H.R. 2309 or any other postal reform legislation, we are writing to ask you to require an independent assessment of the impact that any postal network consolidation will have on communities of color. Such an assessment should include recommendations to the Postal Service on steps it can take to mitigate the effects of consolidation on unemployment.

Thank you very much for your consideration. We will follow up with you shortly. If you have any questions, please contact Senior Counsel Rob Randhava at (202) 466-6058.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President