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**Repeating Failure: Mail Standards Degraded for
the Second Time in Seven Years**

By Paul Steidler

Starting Friday, October 1, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) will hold itself to lower mail delivery standards (i.e., longer delivery times), increasing the time it takes to deliver 39 percent of first-class mail.

USPS did this just seven years ago and the results were bad. Cost savings were not realized, the significantly reduced service standards were never met, and large amounts of first-class mail, USPS's most profitable product, permanently left the system.

Then as now, USPS said having a lower service standard would be good because it would provide greater predictability in delivery times, thereby benefiting customers. Yet USPS never met the target to deliver 96 percent of first-class mail on time and first-class mail delivery times declined in five of the past seven years, as shown below.

USPS should halt this mail slowdown plan and inform Congress and other stakeholders of what it would cost to meet the mail standards adopted in 2014. If it does not, Congress should compel it to do so, and Attorneys General, many of whom have strongly objected to the October 1 mail slowdown, should take legal action.

Exhibit A

**First-Class Mail Service Standards Continually Not Met
Target: 96.0% On-Time Delivery**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Actual</u>
2014	94.11%
2015	89.64%
2016	92.34%
2017	93.29%
2018	92.07%
2019	92.02
2020	89.73%
2021 (Q1)	78.44%
2021 (Q2)	78.13%
2021 (Q3)	87.60%

Sources: "United States Postal Service FY2016 Annual Report to Congress," U.S. Postal Service, p. 17 of PDF. <https://mailomg.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/usps-2016-annual-report.pdf> (2013-15); "United States

Postal Service FY2019 Annual Report to Congress,” U.S. Postal Service, p. 24 of PDF <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2019.pdf> (2016-19); “United States Postal Service Y2020 Annual Report to Congress,” U.S. Postal Service, p. 37 of PDF. <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2020.pdf> (2017-2020); “Board of Governors Open Session,” U.S. Postal Service, February 9, 2021 <https://about.usps.com/who/leadership/board-governors/briefings?video=bgs210209> “Board of Governors Open Session,” U.S. Postal Service, May 7, 2021 <https://about.usps.com/who/leadership/board-governors/briefings?video=bgs210507> “Board of Governors Open Session,” U.S. Postal Service, August 6, 2021 <https://about.usps.com/who/leadership/board-governors/briefings/welcome.htm>

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