

Introduction

My name is Steve Musacco and I have written a book about postal violence, its prevention, and the postal culture. The title of my book is “**Beyond Going Postal: Shifting**



from Workplace Tragedies and Toxic Workplace Environments to a Healthy and Safe Organization”. Prior to my retirement with the Postal Service, I was employed as a Workplace Improvement Analyst at a postal district. Prior to this position, I held positions as Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Supervisor, postal clerk, and letter carrier with the USPS. I served as a Vice-President and President of a small local in Southern California in the 1980s.

This book provides an answer to the question: Why has there been so much violence in the U.S. Postal Service and what can be done to prevent it? It examines the history of violence and toxic work environments within the U.S. Postal Service organization and its negative impacts on the health and psychological well-being of its employees. It also provides comprehensive evidence of the decline of the work culture within the Postal Service and the internal neglect, denial, and lack of accountability by postal management that has encouraged a detrimental labor environment. This book is, to date, the most comprehensive analysis available on postal workplace violence and postal culture in general, and it includes a blueprint for postal management and government leaders to make the U.S. Postal Service a healthier organization for its employees. Written with postal rank and file, union, management, postal families, and government leaders in mind, this book sounds a clarion call to action that cannot be ignored.

My book is now available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). More information can also be found at my personal website at goingpostal-beyond.com. Please share this message with others concerned about the postal culture and its effects.

Best regards,
Steve Musacco, Ph.D.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Oversight and Accountability: Open Letter to Congress

January 31, 2009

Congress of the United States

SUBJECT: Oversight and Accountability of the USPS

This letter is written with a fervent hope that renewed congressional oversight and accountability of the postal culture and its violence prevention efforts will enable the Postal Service to shift from an unhealthy organization to a healthy one. The chain of events as provided below explains my motivation for writing this book.

I could not in good conscience turn a blind eye to high-ranking postal management's egregious display of arrogance and its lack of accountability for highly unethical organizational practices and behaviors and not bring it to the attention of the American public, the press, and, most importantly, to Congress. There has to be stringent oversight and accountability, otherwise the degrading, dehumanizing organizational practices and behaviors far too common in the Postal Service will continue unabated.

Since this open letter is rather lengthy, it is divided in four sections. In the first section, I discuss *my motivation* for writing this open letter and its inclusion in this book. I provide a brief overview of my book in the second section. In the third section, I present what I am convinced is required for the Postal Service to shift from an unhealthy organization to a healthy one. In the final section, I discuss some of the current, critical challenges impacting the Postal Service.

My Motivation for Writing this Letter and Book

On January 3, 2007, I retired from the USPS after nearly thirty-four years of service. Prior to my departure, my postal district became a highly toxic work environment for a very high percentage of employees in postal management. As a result of this development, under my role as the workplace improvement analyst for my postal district, I conducted a workplace climate assessment. In the climate assessment report,¹⁶⁶ the conditions leading to this toxic work environment and the horrific physical and psychological impact it had on at least fifty employees were thoroughly documented.

After completing this report in October 2006, it was sent to the area manager of human resources. Since there was not a timely response to the report, a copy of the report was sent to the Area Vice-President and a courtesy copy was sent to the Assistant Postmaster General. In the cover letter, it was requested that the report be brought to the attention of the Postmaster General on my behalf.

Because no response was received from these officials and the results from my meeting with the area manager of human resources were unsatisfactory, a cover letter and copies of my report were sent to the OIG director, human capital, and OIG auditor-in-charge, human capital team, with courtesy copies sent to a U.S senator, the President, NAPS, and the President of NAPUS. Sadly, to the best of my knowledge, there was no further inquiry or investigation conducted after I retired.

Now that I have addressed my initial motivation for writing this book, it is important to briefly explain how and why this book became more than just a commentary on how a specific category of employees were egregiously treated in one postal district. First, how they were treated was not unique to my district, nor was the category of employees unique to the USPS in general. In order to demonstrate this, I needed to set the foundation for this discussion by looking at the nature of violence in the workplace, both physical and psychological. Accordingly, in Part 1 of this book, I provide a comprehensive definition of workplace violence and examine its prevalence, sources, and impact in the United States in general and the USPS in particular.

Over two years have passed since the submission of my climate assessment report, and postal managers from my former postal district complain that their workplace environment remains highly stressful. Suffice to say, at this point, when top management or an organization condones or tolerates toxic work environments for its employees, it has no moral compass. Accordingly, there is a critical need for your oversight and legislative action to ensure accountability for how postal employees are treated in their workplace in postal facilities throughout the country.

Brief Summary of My Book

Parts 1-5

In Part 1, I examine the nature and prevalence of workplace violence in the United States and the U.S. Postal Service. Because it has been an important debate for experts in the area of workplace violence, and for Congress, in Part 2 I examine the notion of “going postal” to determine if there is any credence to the assignment of this controversial term to the USPS. In taking a closer look at the record, as presented in chapter four, it became very clear that the arguments by the USPS,¹⁶⁷ CDC,¹⁶⁸ Califano Report,¹⁶⁹ and invested consultants to frame the notion of “going postal” as a myth is not supported by the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Based on my review of the record, the conclusion by the Califano Report was that postal employees are no more likely to verbally abuse or physically assault their co-workers than employees in the national workforce is flawed and erroneous. Contrary to the Califano Report, the record instead supports the conclusion that the USPS work environments have been a trigger for some of its employee-directed homicides and that these incidents are far more frequent in the Postal Service when compared to other organizations. The overwhelming empirical evidence supports that this notion is both accurate and fair.

In Part 3 I review the USPS’s violence prevention efforts to determine how well they were addressing this critical priority. To the USPS’s credit, it developed an excellent violence prevention plan to deal with violence in the workplace, for both psychological aggression and physical workplace aggression. The main problem with the plan is that its six core strategies were not fully implemented or fully executed, especially the Peaceful Parting initiative. It is also particularly troubling that the Postal Service does not routinely enforce the “Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior” for its management personnel. These examples demonstrate a lack of commitment to follow through and are intricately linked to the USPS’s emphasis on top-down controls and paramilitary approaches to solving organizational issues, which permeate and are reflective of the postal culture.

In Part 4 I assess the building blocks of postal culture and the *impact* of USPS strategic plans, congressional actions¹⁷⁰ and oversight, internal stakeholders, and postal law enforcement on the workplace environment and its employees. In chapter six, I briefly review the history of the USPS, including significant events and changes from the 1950s to 1992. Special attention is given to the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act¹⁷¹

and the subsequent realignments, restructurings, and downsizings that transpired after its passage. In Part 4, I also discuss the impact of the postal culture on postal employees, their families, and the organization. In the following, I summarize observations, findings, and conclusions, from Appendices C-E and chapters seven to nine. I wrote these components of Part 4 in significant part with you being the intended audience.

Appendix C

In Appendix C, I provide observations and comments regarding the *USPS's seven strategic plans* (1998-2013) and I critically examine the *Presidential Commission Report of 2003*¹⁷² and the *2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act*¹⁷³ as they relate to the building blocks of the postal culture. In this examination, it became clear that the USPS had not planned or strategically focused on the creation of an empowered, participative work culture for its employees.

Further, I concluded that the main focuses of the USPS's strategic plans dealt with operations' efficiency, improved service, reduction of costs, revenue generation, and succession planning for postal management. In all these areas, the overarching focus was on top-down controls, with diminutive attention provided to create and maintain a healthy organization.

In review of the Presidential Postal Commission Report, I found its recommendations very telling. Their recommendations would have eliminated your oversight, provided massive increases in salaries for postal executives, and weakened postal unions' collective bargaining rights.

While the Bush commissioners focused on recommendations so that the USPS could become more efficient, productive, and flexible in carrying out its mission to provide universal service, they did so in order that the chief beneficiaries would be the large mailers. The clear losers, if their recommendations were implemented, would have been at the expense of postal employees' benefits and rights, along with the rights of residential customers. The report was simply nothing more than a blueprint for gradual USPS privatization.

Three years after the report was published, you enacted the 2006 Postal Accountability Act,¹⁷⁴ reluctantly signed into law by President Bush. Fortunately, you rejected virtually all the regressive measures recommended by Bush's commission. This

rejection bode well for the postal and union management organizations and the employees they represent.

It is noted, however, that after the passage of the Act, the USPS Board of Governors, in collusion with high-profile business leaders in the mailing industry, continue their concerted efforts to privatize core operations of the USPS. The top-down control focus of the USPS, coupled with continual attempts to slowly and deliberately privatize its core operations, have had a very negative impact on a preexisting harsh postal culture. Postal employees are generally content with their wages and benefits, but their postal culture continues to deteriorate because employees' empowerment and participation is practically non-existent. Their trust in the intentions of top postal officials, from craft employees to senior plant and district managers, is very low. Both union and management organization leaders alike are becoming more and more allied to openly confront the USPS's arguably *uncaring* and reckless path.

Appendix D

In Appendix D, concerns of postal management are highlighted, concerns that parallel some of the findings of the workplace climate assessment previously discussed at the beginning of this letter. For example, it was noted that on March 7, 2007, the three management associations' presidents¹⁷⁵ (i.e., NAPUS, NAPS, and the League) wrote an historical letter to John Potter, Postmaster General, requesting a meeting to discuss their mutual concerns about the deteriorating work climate for their members in the field. In this letter, the three signatories stated:

Postmasters, managers, and supervisors are under tremendous pressure, with more requirements, reports, and unrealistic expectations. We are concerned these conditions, if not reviewed at our level, could result in serious consequences [emphasis added].... [W]e believe that these are issues that should be a concern for both the USPS and the management associations.¹⁷⁶

In response to this request, Charles Mapa, President of the League, reported on the League's website that the association presidents met with Mr. Potter, and he agreed that the numerous telecons that postmasters and supervisors were forced to attend daily were of little value. He reported that Mr. Potter agreed to a **task force**, including the three management association presidents and two high-ranking officials

at postal headquarters. However, as noted in Appendix D, these concerns were still voiced in testimony at congressional meetings¹⁷⁷ on August 17, 2007, and on May 8, 2008. Sadly, I was recently informed that the subject task force was never implemented. These types of “broken promises” by the USPS regarding critical issues are far too commonplace.

In Appendix D, I also assess the role of the USPS Board of Governors, the four postal unions, and the three management associations in the context of how they have impacted the postal culture, especially in the last fifteen to twenty years. One of my central observations includes that the USPS has had a long history of using the scientific management approach, or *management unilateralism*, regarding its planning and implementation of work methods and standards. This deliberate and intentional approach discounts employee participation and input in workplace decision-making. It has generated volatile anger, high stress, low morale, and violations of employee dignity and self-esteem—not just of craft employees, but also management personnel in the field.

As further noted in Appendix D, the USPS’s attempt, under the direction of the BOG, to outsource its core operations and its secret work in network realignment of facilities has exacerbated employee turmoil and anger. Together these organizational factors have accelerated the deterioration of the postal culture in the past ten years, especially the last two years. From postal employees’ perspective, it would not be difficult to conclude that the USPS cares little about their input, job security, or well-being.

Postal unions and management associations have inadvertently added to the high tensions created by the approaches and decisions of the USPS. They have strongly lobbied Congress and have had numerous information pickets. They released dozens of articles critical of the USPS approach to contracting and flawed performance measurement systems. Many of these bulletins were posted on union bulletin boards at all major postal facilities and on their respective websites. As a result of its disagreements and “fighting back” with the USPS on these critical issues, it may have affected some members to take even a dimmer view of the organization and become more demoralized and angry.

The noted tensions, anger, and damaged self-esteem of postal employees do not bode well for the USPS’s workplace environments or for the prevention of workplace violence. The top-down control approaches espoused and modeled by USPS

top management cascades through all layers of field management, and its negative spillover effects can be seen frequently and daily on the workroom floor.

Appendix E

In Appendix E, I examine the role of both the United States Postal Inspection Service and the United States USPS Inspector General Office (OIG) in the context of how they have impacted the postal culture, especially since 2003. Postal law enforcement has had a long, reputable history of dealing effectively with issues of mail fraud, embezzlement of postal funds, and mail theft.

As a third appendage of postal management, however, they have not served postal employees well. They have not effectively or willingly investigated misconduct by high-ranking postal officials, and in its recent history, they have ostensibly aligned themselves with postal management's intent to privatize core postal operations. An exception to this history is the period from 1997 to 2003 when Karla Corcoran was the Inspector General.

In my examination of the recent history of the OIG (i.e., since 1993), the review of the record supports that the office has shown little respect for employee and union rights. It supports that they have shown little or no respect for the right to privacy on information maintained by medical providers, nor have they advised workers of their right to remain silent and have a union representative present to advise them during an investigation. In trampling on these rights, the OIG has violated the National Labor Relations Act,¹⁷⁸ the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act,¹⁷⁹ and the National Collective Bargaining Agreements, as well as other statutory laws and rights afforded under the United States Constitution.

It became unequivocally clear that OIG's mission statement and its actual practices are aligned with the bottom line of the USPS. In practice, this means that OIG not only audits the methods and practices of the USPS as it relates to its core operations, but it also assists the Board of Governors and high-ranking postal officials in the oversight of these methods and practices. It further became clear in my review of the record that the OIG under the leadership of Mr. Williams has provided tacit approval and support for USPS privatization measures.

Some may ask the question: Why has the OIG become so aligned with the USPS's bottom line and the USPS's push to weaken the notion of universal service, thereby

opening the door for major contracting out of core postal operations? The answer is, in great part, political.

All federal agencies and the USPS have experienced unprecedented pressure from the Bush administration to contract as many core functions as possible. Under the helm of the BOG, this translates in attempts to open the door for major mailers to become contractors for transportation, maintenance, mail processing, and delivery positions. The mailing apparatus in the United States is a \$900 billion industry. If the universal service requirement can be relaxed by congressional legislation or bypassed, this means *huge profits* for many of these contractors involved in the mailing industry.

Chapter 7

In chapter seven, important hearings and inquiries regarding the postal culture, including reports by Kappel,¹⁸⁰ GAO,¹⁸¹ congressional committees,¹⁸² and the Califano commission,¹⁸³ were reviewed. As a result of this review, coupled with findings and observations from chapter six and Appendices C-E, the organizational culture of the USPS as it relates to its primary core values were discussed. The pertinent conclusions from this review as they relate to the postal culture are provided below.

The core values embedded in the USPS's organizational culture and its alignment to its organizational structure has engendered a paramilitary, authoritarian postal culture. It is a culture that promotes unilateral, top-down approaches to manage its employees and their workload. This bottom-line mentality is highly visible in postal facilities where autocratic management styles are too often reflected by use of fear, harassment, bullying, or intimidation to achieve service, financial, and productivity goals. These management styles are frequently rewarded by promotions, annual merit raises, or cash awards for achievement of corporate goals.

Consequences of the unilateral, top-down approaches employed by the USPS include widespread fear, anger, stress, and turmoil for both craft and management employees alike. Because of the concerted effort by the USPS's Board of Governors to contract out core postal operations, these fears, tensions, stress, and turmoil have escalated in the last several years. Also, since these management approaches are systemic in the USPS, many postal facilities have toxic work environments and they

can be a catalyst or trigger for serious acts of workplace violence, including homicide and suicide.

Based on my review of a myriad of reports, studies, and investigations regarding the USPS culture, coupled with my experience as an insider, the USPS is clearly a highly paramilitary, authoritarian organization.

Chapter 8

In chapter eight, I noted my relevant experiences in the USPS from 1973 to 2007 as a career employee. In presenting critical concerns in my tenure with the USPS, I discussed those experiences that revealed the impact of unilateral, top-down management styles, policies, and standards and methods and their relationship to the fostering of toxic workplace environments and workplace tragedies.

The reporting of these lived experiences served to validate the conclusion that, in agreement with the ample evidence examined and provided throughout many of the chapters of this book and its appendices, the postal culture fosters a management style at all levels of the organization that is oppressive, autocratic, and uncaring. Stated differently, these findings are in agreement with the documentary, quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal evidence reviewed from congressional hearings and investigations, GAO reports, postal commission reports, and from the literature in the workplace violence field.

Chapter 9

In chapter nine, I discussed the negative fallout of postal culture on employees, their families, and the organization, focusing primarily on the negative impact of the postal culture on employees' physical and psychological health. I highlighted this impact from my personal experience as an EAP representative and a WIA for the USPS from 1986 to 2007.

In [Part 5](#), I provided a blueprint for the USPS to become a safe and healthy organization. In the following, I summarize requirements and recommendations to the USPS from chapter ten. Like [Part 4](#), I wrote chapter ten in significant part with you being the intended audience.

Chapter 10

In chapter ten, requirements and recommendations were provided to enable the USPS to shift from an unhealthy organization to a healthy one. In order to enable this shift, these requirements and recommendations were linked to: 1) leadership, 2) organizational design and job redesign, 3) reward and performance evaluation systems, 4) selection and development, 5) change management 6) employee involvement, and 7) safety. As a means to support the Postal Service's shift from an unhealthy organization to a healthy organization, a key requirement was that the USPS enter a long-term contract with a team of organizational and occupational health psychologists to assist in the design, development, and implementation in the above-noted areas for change and improvement.

Requirements and Recommendations

I close this book with an open letter to you. It is highly unlikely that any meaningful or substantive change in the postal culture will occur unless you provide renewed oversight and accountability. Without renewed oversight and accountability, the USPS will continue to be a violent-prone organization with a culture that engenders toxic workplace environments. The blueprint provided for the Postal Service to shift from an unhealthy organization to a healthy one, as noted in chapter ten, will not be acted upon if simply left to the USPS.

Accordingly, in the following, requirements and recommendations are made on how you can ensure that the necessary changes are implemented. If acted upon, I believe these requirements and recommendations will provide the framework and direction for ensuring the necessary changes and improvements to the organizational culture of the USPS and its organizational structure.

The first legislative requirement that is necessary is the abolishment of the BOG. This would require that either the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act be amended or that the PAEA be amended. The BOG, under heavy-handed influence of the executive branch and business leaders from the mailing industry, has historically attempted and continually strives to contract-out core postal operations.

Because the BOG are appointed for long-term appointments and are essentially part-time administrators who meet infrequently, they are *tone deaf* to the issue of the postal culture and how it contributes to workplace violence and toxic workplace environments. The focus and agenda of the BOG has been almost exclusively on

business and customer objectives. This limited and unbalanced focus has contributed immensely to the acceleration of the USPS becoming an unsafe and unhealthy organization. Accordingly, in order for the USPS to have any real chance of changing its postal culture, the BOG has to be abolished.

In place of the BOG, it is a corollary requirement that the Postmaster General be held responsible and accountable to improve the postal culture. As for future selections and the removal of the Postmaster General for cause, it is recommended that the General Accounting Office's (GAO) comptroller general of the United States be vested with this authority. The GAO is, as you are aware, very familiar with the postal culture and its challenges. If you consider vesting another agency with this authority, it is recommended that you rule out the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC).

As noted in Appendix D, through the influence of the executive branch and the mailing industry, the PRC has arguably become politicized and partisan regarding the business interests of the large mailers. As a result of the current make-up of the PRC members and in view of their long-term appointments, this stance is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

The second legislative requirement is that you amend the 2006 Postal Accountability Enhancement Act by placing restrictions on the PRC's oversight and accountability responsibilities regarding the USPS. The amendment will need to include specific language that prevents the PRC from colluding with the postal mailers to privatize the USPS, including quarterly audits of the PRC by the GAO to ensure compliance.

The third legislative requirement is that you further amend the 1996 legislation known as the Inspector General Office Act of 1978, as amended.¹⁸⁴ This legislation, as you are aware, authorized for some of the auditing and investigative functions to be transferred from the USPIS to a newly created OIG within the USPS, and for the Inspector General to be appointed by and under the general supervision of the BOG.

Specifically, it is recommended that you amend this legislation to stipulate that the Inspector General will report to the comptroller general of the United States. This recommendation is consistent with my earlier recommendation that the comptroller select future postmaster generals.

The fourth legislative requirement is that you amend the 2006 Postal Accountability Enhancement Act by requiring a long-term contract team of professionals to assist the USPS in creating and sustaining a safe and healthy organization. Global

recommendations in the amendment include the following: 1) the contract team to be hired and financed through monies authorized and provided to the GAO, 2) a long-term contract for five years with provisions for extensions, and 3) progress reports provided by the contract team quarterly to the comptroller of the United States, Congress, USPS, and all the union and management organizations.

The fifth legislative requirement is to enact national legislation for the prevention of bullying in the workplace. Dr. Gary Namie and his wife, Dr. Ruth Namie, founders of the Bullying Institute,¹⁸⁵ along with their colleague Dr. David Yamada,¹⁸⁶ have for years pushed for such legislation at the state and federal level. In order for national legislation for the prevention of workplace bullying to have the intended impact, it would require sanctions to employers or their representatives who are in violation of a new workplace statute that defines workplace bullying as a harmful and illegal activity.

Specifically, sanctions would need to include monetary fines and legal recourse, similar to the EEO process for the targets of bullying. Additionally, it is recommended that the legislation empower the U.S. Department of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) with oversight and shared enforcement authority for this new statute with the National Institute for Occupational Safety (NIOSH).

In crafting the fifth legislative requirement, it is critical that language in the legislation include a provision to designate additional monies to NIOSH to research the impact of stress in the workplace in general and the effects of bullying within the government agencies (including the USPS) and private organizations. In March 2008, NIOSH, in collaboration with the American Psychological Association and Society for Occupational Health Psychology, sponsored the Seventh International Conference on Occupational Health & Stress. A significant part of the conference focused on workplace bullying and its prevention. It is further recommended that language in the legislation include a provision to empower and provide monies to NIOSH to conduct specific studies comparing workplace homicides and suicides in other federal agencies with the USPS.

The fifth legislative requirement will need specific language to address sanctions for the violations of the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA). As noted in Appendix D, this has been a special and ongoing concern for postal management associations and the employees they represent. In previous testimony to congressional committees, management association presidents have testified about this widespread problem for several decades.

However, the USPS continues to use organizational bullying tactics as a means to compel many field management employees to work numerous hours, way beyond the traditional forty-hour work week, and without additional compensation. In the climate assessment report regarding my former district, this organizational bullying practice was noted as a chief cause of widespread and harmful psychological and physical symptoms. It is critical that Congress address and ensure that this injurious and unsafe practice is no longer the norm within the USPS for its field management employees.

The sixth legislative requirement is to enact legislation that prevents the USPS from significant contracting out of its core Postal Services. Two bills that currently support this legislative requirement are the Mail Delivery Protection Act¹⁸⁷ and the Mail Network Protection Act.¹⁸⁸ Until these bills or similar bills are passed, Congress will be caught in the middle of the maneuvers by profiteers in the mailing industry to privatize more and more core postal operations and the union and management organizations battling to prevent it from happening.

One additional and critical requirement for dramatic improvement of the harsh, paramilitary postal culture is for Congress to ensure that, by virtue of its oversight and accountability responsibilities, the specific requirements noted in chapter 10 are fully implemented by the USPS, including that the USPS create a new "Department of Organizational Effectiveness."

If the USPS is able to make these changes, in the context of the seven structural and cultural factors delineated in chapter 10, it can successfully shift from an unsafe and unhealthy organization to a safe and healthy one. This will not happen, however, unless you maintain stringent oversight and hold the USPS fully accountable for this transition.

A Clarion Call for Post-PAEA Reform

During the last several years, there have been several unprecedented actions and events impacting the future of the USPS. For example:

1. The last two to three years in the USPS have been marked by employees' pickets regarding outsourcing of postal operations and employee treatment, the egregious tactics used by the OIG, and three separate incidences of homicide committed by current and former employees in 2006.

2. In light of a 7.6 billion dollar deficit from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2008, the USPS is considering the lay-off of employees for the first time in its history and wage concessions from its management associations.
3. In 2006, the PAEA was signed into law, several post-PAEA congressional hearings¹⁸⁹ were held, and bills were sponsored to prevent the USPS from contracting out postal operations.
4. The PRC recently selected a contractor¹⁹⁰ to conduct a study on the universal service obligation, despite writings from two key members of the contractor who have expressed anti-union sentiments and the favoring of contracting of core postal operations.
5. In June 2008, the USPS submitted to you its "Network Plan."¹⁹¹ On this same date, the USPS also submitted a seventy-page draft statement of work for contractors,¹⁹² regarding proposals on contracting services involving distribution, infrastructure, and transportation for bulk mailing centers. Subsequent to these submissions, the USPS had requested authorization for early retirements for up to forty thousand career employees, which was approved by the OPM. Additionally, the USPS is reviewing the options of layoffs, four-day work weeks (ten hours a day), and two tours of duty instead of three at mail processing plants.
6. On July 24, 2008, the Congressional Subcommittee on Federal Workforce held a meeting to discuss the USPS's network plan and its potential impact on its stakeholders. As expected, the major representatives for the mailing industry and the Postal Service enthusiastically supported the plan, while the union organizations were adamantly against it.
7. In GAO testimony¹⁹³ at the July 24, 2008 subject meeting and in its previous study¹⁹⁴ submitted to Congress in July 2008, it was noted that the USPS had not been transparent in dealing with stakeholders, that the USPS did not have a system in place to determine savings from the plan, and that it did not provide an accounting for all of its contracting services.

Indeed, the stakes are high; addressing and dealing with issues regarding the paramilitary, authoritarian postal culture and the systematic attempts of large scale privatization of postal core services will be an arduous task. Your full attention and commitment to addressing and dealing with these issues are absolutely necessary. Safeguarding the integrity, safety, health, and rights of postal employees and their union and management organizations over the interests of profiteers in the mailing

industry is the only honorable path to take. The requirements and recommendations noted herein, I believe, provide a blueprint to achieve these objectives.

The record shows that you have traveled this honorable path. Now is the time for you to meet these partisan and profiteering interests head-on, and to say enough is enough, by expeditiously enacting the required legislative changes and forwarding them to the President of the United States. Postal employees and their family members are counting on it.

Best regards,

Stephen D. Musacco, Ph.D.