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COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0509

November 16, 2016

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Guy Cottrell
Chief Postal Inspector, U.S. Postal Inspection Service
U.S. Postal Inspection Service
Washington, DC 20260-2169

Dear Chief Postal Inspector Cottrell:

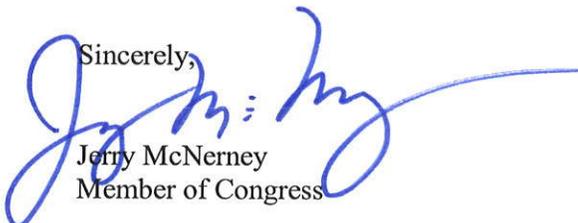
I am writing to you about fraud committed against U.S. Postal Service (USPS) customers through mail holds and change-of-address forms. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) protects the integrity of our mail system and works to prevent fraud. This responsibility is even more important as we near the holiday seasons and millions of people travel out of town to visit family and friends, many placing a hold on their mail or even changing residences.

Change-of-address requests, of which USPS processes more than 35 million each year, and mail-hold requests, are fundamental services for postal customers across the nation. While I understand that there are approximately 750 instances of reported fraud for change-of-address requests, we must strive to protect all postal customers as best we can.

Several news outlets, as well as constituents I represent, have reported that individuals are fraudulently filing change-of-address forms while simultaneously placing a hold on mail service so that a USPS validation letter is never received. This allows individuals to steal mail, commit identify theft, and pursue other criminal activities. While I believe USPIS and its staff work diligently to carry-out its mission, please address the following questions:

- Does USPIS believe current consumer safeguard measures are sufficient?
- What steps is the U.S. Postal Inspection Service taking to prevent fraudulent activity through change-of-addresses and mail-hold requests?
- Are additional consumer protection measures being considered going forward?
- Does USPIS increase scrutiny of change-of-address and mail holds that are requested simultaneously or have the capability to track these types of requests?
- Are there uniform consumer protections and safeguards in place for change-of-address and mail holds regardless of whether they are filed in person or online?

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to protecting the integrity of our nation's mail service.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress