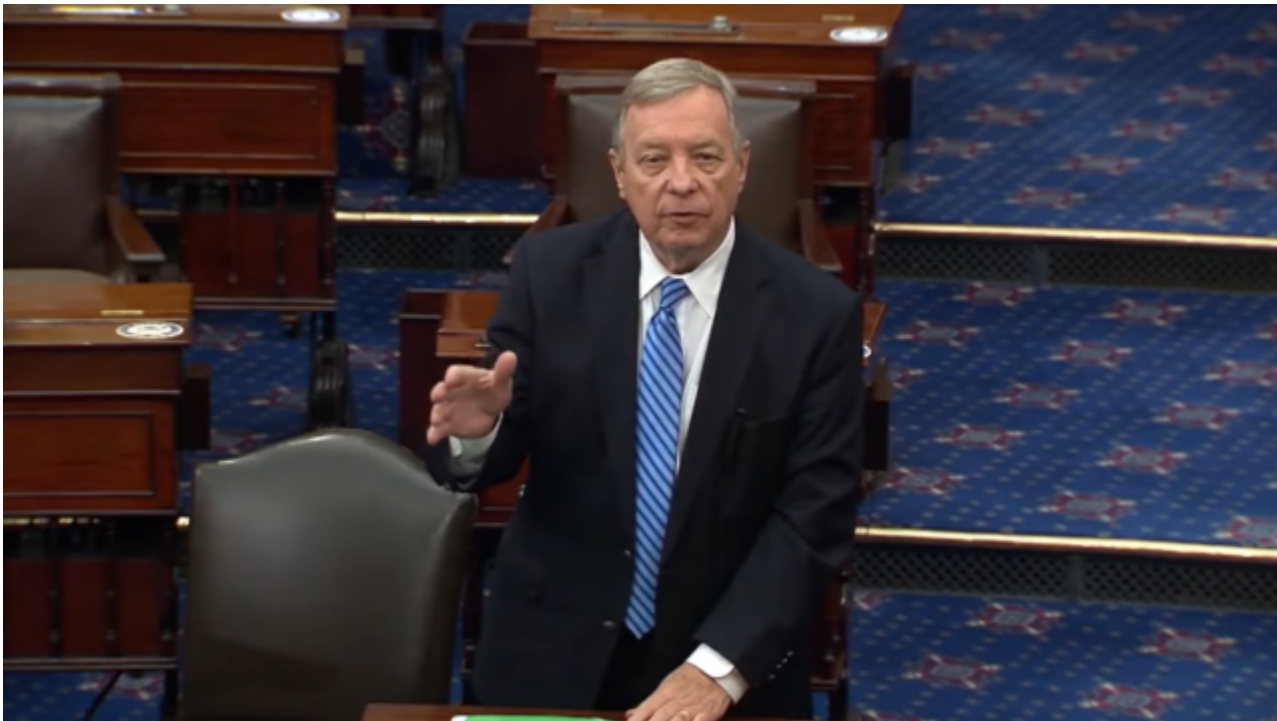


Durbin, Collins Introduce Legislation To Address Uptick In Attacks On Letter Carriers On The Job

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) today led 10 of their colleagues in introducing bipartisan legislation to address the steep increase in armed robberies against postal workers, who are often targeted for their arrow keys. The *Postal Police Reform Act* would ensure that Postal Police Officers may be assigned to duty outside of Postal Service real property to offer protection to letter carriers on their routes.

The Postal Inspection Service reports that armed robberies of letter carriers increased sharply between 2018 and 2021, rising from 36 incidents to 154 incidents. The arrow

keys can command thousands of dollars on the clandestine market because they allow access to cluster mailboxes and their contents, which include Social Security checks, prescriptions, and other valuable items.

In 2020, under the leadership of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) issued a directive that restricted Postal Police Officers to physical USPS properties. This directive has prevented Postal Police Officers from protecting the postal service and the integrity of the postal system outside physical postal properties. Prior to the *2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act*, which granted greater authority to USPS to control Postal Law enforcement, Congress regularly granted Postal Police Officers authority to carry out their duties both on and off USPS property through annual appropriations language. The *Postal Police Reform Act of 2023* would counteract Postmaster General DeJoy's 2020 directive and again allow Postal Police Officers to operate outside of Postal Service real property.

“Letter carriers perform an essential service of our government, but delivering mail has become an increasingly dangerous job. It’s shameful that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy continues to turn a blind eye to the rampant and violent crimes against his employees,” said Durbin. “I’m introducing bipartisan legislation today to counter Postmaster General DeJoy’s dangerous 2020 directive that restricted Postal Police Officers to physical USPS properties. Letter carriers deserve to feel safe while on the job, and the *Postal Police Reform Act* will ensure that Postal Police Officers can adequately protect letter carriers from the real threats on their routes.”

“Our nation has seen an unacceptable increase in postal crime, and due to current restrictions, Postal Police Officers are unable to carry out important public safety duties,” said Collins. “By allowing Postal Police Officers to work beyond Postal Service property, this bipartisan legislation recognizes the urgent need to protect our mail carriers and better secure our entire postal system.”

Cosponsoring the *Postal Police Reform Act* are U.S. Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ron Wyden (D-OR), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Chris Coons (D-DE), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), and Angus King (I-ME).

“The men and women who deliver our mail and packages play an important role in our communities, but rising crime has resulted in more thefts and attacks against delivery workers,” said Moran. “This legislation will help make certain the law enforcement branch of the USPS will have the authority needed to help apprehend criminals and deter crime against postal workers while out on delivery.”

“Too many Ohioans have had their mail stolen and too many postal workers face threats on the job. Postal robberies and mail theft are federal crimes, and the responsibility to protect postal workers and their mail should not be pushed onto overwhelmed local law enforcement personnel across Ohio,” said Brown. “Since Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has limited Postal Police Officers’ ability to do their jobs, this bill is necessary to empower the Postal Police to keep our postal workers safe and ensure Ohioans receive their mail.”

“The rise in violence and crime against letter carriers across the country is deeply troubling,” Duckworth said. “Our hardworking mail carriers deserve to feel safe and protected as they carry out vital delivery services trusted by Veterans, small businesses and all Americans to connect them with families, communities and services throughout the nation. I’m proud to join Senator Durbin in introducing today’s *Postal Police Reform Act* to help ensure Postal Police officers can protect our letter carriers along their routes.”

“At a time when attacks on postal workers are at troubling highs, it makes no sense to hamstring Postal Police Officers with senseless regulations that prevent them from addressing crime where it happens,” said Coons. “The *Postal Police Reform Act* is critical legislation that will allow Postal Police Officers to carry out their most basic duties: protecting the mail and those who carry it. I’m optimistic that this bill will keep postal workers safe and ensure that more Americans can have faith that their mail will be delivered in a secure, consistent, and timely fashion.”

“Mail carriers and Postal Service employees play a critical role in ensuring millions of Americans receive their mail,” said Kaine. “Amid a rise in mail theft in recent years, this bipartisan bill will help protect mail and mail carriers and will ensure Americans who depend on the Postal Service get their bills, prescription medications, and more.”

“The increase in mail theft and violence against letter carriers in Nevada is unacceptable, and it’s vital that Postal Police Officers have the authority to protect employees all along their routes,” said Cortez Masto. “This legislation will eliminate Postmaster General DeJoy’s dangerous rule limiting Postal Police Officers’ jurisdiction and make sure postal workers can continue to safely deliver the prescriptions, checks, and other necessities Nevadans rely on.”

“From life-sustaining medications and important financial documents, to postcards and letters from loved ones, the United States Postal Service’s timely, reliable delivery of mail to Maine households is an absolutely essential service for our state,” said King. “The *Postal Police Reform Act* would ensure that our postal carriers have the safety and security to carry out the duties of their job without having to worry about violence or

robberies. It's an absolute shame that legislation like this is even needed, but I will continue to support our letter carriers as they continue their hard work to meet the delivery expectations of Americans across the country."

"The National Association of Postal Supervisors applauds Senators Dick Durbin and Susan Collins for their introduction of the *Postal Police Reform Act of 2023*," said Chuck Mulidore, Executive Vice President of the National Association of Postal Supervisors. "This important measure would reverse the ill-advised decision by the Postal Service to ensure that the USPS police force has the full authority to protect postal personnel service, postal property and the U.S. mail on or off postal real estate. The astronomical escalation of postal-related crime, including assaults on mail carriers, coincides with the implementation of a Postal Service policy to severely restrict the ability of postal police to exercise their legitimate authority. Enactment of the Durbin-Collins bill would ensure that postal police have the authority to enforce federal law and protect postal assets, including its dedicated employees."

Specifically, the *Postal Police Reform Act of 2023* would clarify provisions in federal law to ensure that Postal Police Officers may be assigned to duty outside of Postal Service real property, for the purpose of protecting the mail, Postal Service property, persons on Postal Service property, and on-duty Postal Service employees. This clarification will allow the Postal Service to assign Postal Police Officers to protect letter carriers against robberies, which are often committed to steal "arrow" master keys for use in later mail theft. The *Postal Police Reform Act* provides the Postal Service with the flexibility to use the Postal Police as the service needs, without imposing additional costs on the Postal Service.

The *Postal Police Reform Act* has earned endorsements from the National Association of Postal Supervisors and the Postal Police Officers Association.

Durbin has repeatedly called out Postmaster General DeJoy's inaction as letter carriers face physical threats. In [October 2022](#), Durbin wrote to the U.S. Postal Board of Governors to express his concern over the inadequate response to the rise in violent crimes against mail carriers. Durbin followed this letter up by [writing](#) to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and USPS urging the two agencies to work together to vigorously investigate the armed robberies and prosecute those who commit them.

Durbin also [called on](#) USPS to reduce incentives for mail robbery by requiring two-factor authentication on cluster mailboxes rather than relying on arrow keys that allow access to all area mailboxes. USPS has since followed Durbin's suggestion and has begun instituting two-factor authentication. Durbin concluded that August 2023 letter by requesting more information about how USPS and DOJ will prevent letter carrier robberies, theft, and related crimes, including internal measures to track arrow keys and

develop statistics on armed robberies, efforts to inform the public of measures they can take to secure their mail, and the rollout of hardened blue collection boxes.

Durbin has [met](#) directly with postal workers, including hosting members of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) in his Washington office.

When a similar string of arrow key thefts took place in 2011, Durbin urged the former Postmaster General to implement a rapid alert system that informed carriers of the crimes committed in their vicinity. These alerts have been discontinued under the current Postmaster General.