

# State of Vermont

## Senate Chamber



Montpelier, Vermont

### Joint Senate Resolution

By Senators Ashe, Campbell, Carris, Doyle, Illuzzi, McCormack and Nitka,

**J.R.S. 47.** Joint resolution urging the United States Postal Service not to implement its proposed major reductions and urging Congress to enact the Postal Service Protection Act.

*Whereas*, the motto of the United States Postal Service (USPS) proclaims that “neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds,” and

*Whereas*, although severe weather conditions may not be a barrier to the prompt delivery of the United States mail, apparently administrative ineptitude and poor planning may prove a far more likely reason for impeded mail delivery, and

*Whereas*, in 2011, the USPS proposed a major reduction in postal services that if implemented would shutter 252 mail-processing facilities nationwide and could result in the elimination of 100,000 jobs, and

*Whereas*, in Vermont, the White River Junction mail-processing center and potentially 15 local post offices, many of them rural, could close, and

*Whereas*, should the White River Junction processing facility be closed, jobs in Burlington and Manchester, New Hampshire could also be affected, potentially resulting in an overall loss of 51 jobs and the relocation of 195 other USPS employees, and

*Whereas*, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution provides that “The Congress shall have Power . . . To establish Post Offices and post Roads,” and

*Whereas*, unlike most federally organized agencies, the USPS is entirely self-funded, and USPS revenues help defray the federal deficit, and were these revenues not being diverted for deficit reduction purposes, they could be used to help underwrite the cost of the USPS, and

*Whereas*, the USPS connects virtually every United States and territorial address and is a vital link for locations with inadequate Internet service, as is the case in a number of Vermont communities, and

*Whereas*, the fiscal crisis that confronts the USPS results from a requirement that it prefund its retiree health benefit fund for 75 years in advance, within a 10-year time frame, at an annual cost of \$5.5 billion, and were this federal requirement struck, the USPS would be operating nearly debt-free and with a \$15 billion line of credit, and

*Whereas*, if these cutbacks come to fruition, the one-day in-state delivery of mail would become a two- to three-day time lag, and

*Whereas*, as an alternative to eliminating the 75-year prefunding requirement, were the price of a first class letter raised from 44 cents to 57

cents, which would still make the USPS the least expensive postal service in the industrial West, then none of the processing plants would need to be closed, and

*Whereas*, in December 2011, in response to the strong public and Congressional outcry, United States Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe delayed the implementation date until May 15, 2012, and

*Whereas*, on the night of January 4, 2012, a large crowd of approximately 500 persons attended a USPS-sponsored forum held at the American Legion Hall in White River Junction where many of the attendees, both postal workers and the general public, expressed strong opposition to the closure plans, criticizing the economic impact on both service quality and the loss of jobs, and

*Whereas*, among the attendees were Governor Peter Shumlin, Secretary of Commerce and Community Development Lawrence Miller, Commissioner of Labor Annie Noonan, the entire Vermont Congressional delegation including United States Senator Bernie Sanders, who spoke of “a death spiral for the post office,” and members of the General Assembly, all of whom were present to express their support for keeping the White River Junction processing center and all Vermont post offices open, and

*Whereas*, in response to the intended USPS reductions, Senator Bernie Sanders has introduced the Postal Service Protection Act, which would: eliminate the 75-year advance funding requirement and enable the USPS to recover the overpayment of at least \$50 billion that it has made to the fund; eliminate the prohibition on the USPS providing nonpostal services; prevent the closing of rural post offices; protect six-day delivery; and protect mail processing facilities, and

*Whereas*, the health of Vermont’s predominantly rural economy is extremely dependent on the robust operation of the United States Postal Service’s six-days-per-week delivery of documents, packages, and personal correspondence, and the closing of the White River Junction processing center and any local post offices is not easily measurable and could result in unforeseen negative economic consequences for Vermont, and

*Whereas*, the integrity of the USPS would be severely threatened should the proposed reductions take effect, and the legislation that Senator Bernie Sanders has proposed would provide a more sound financial basis for USPS operations, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly urges the United States Postal Service not to implement its proposed major reductions and further urges Congress to enact the Postal Service Protection Act, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Northern New England District of the United States Postal Service, to United States Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

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President of the Senate

Attested to:

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Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
John H. Bloomer, Jr.  
Secretary of the Senate

Date:\_\_\_\_\_