

September 9, 2003

David C. Williams
Inspector General
United States Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Dear Mr. Williams:

We are writing to ask you to review the decision of the United States Postal Service (USPS) to eliminate the presence of Postal Police Officers at 6 postal facilities, including ones in Hartford, Connecticut and Seattle, Washington. Based on information provided by USPS and the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), we are concerned that the decision to remove postal police from these locations is not supported by 1997 and 2001 assessments of the security needs of these facilities and that the USPS' plans to substitute contract security personnel and physical security measures for the presence of postal police does not adequately safeguard postal employees, customers or the assets of the USPS. Therefore, we request that you conduct an audit of USPS security needs at postal facilities to determine what security measures are required and whether USPS is implementing a plan that will meet those needs.

Information has been provided to us by the USPS and the USPIS in response to our inquiries into the basis on which the decision was made to eliminate postal police at these locations. This documentation raises concerns about the information on which USPS and USPIS relied to move forward with the proposed postal police terminations. For example, these materials include information that appears to support the continued presence of postal police at these facilities, particularly those like Hartford which are located in high crime neighborhoods. In addition, this documentation indicates that there may be weaknesses in the USPS plan to utilize physical security measures, such as electronic access control devices, as alternatives to the presence of security personnel. It also appears that facilities which have previously undergone the removal of this security force have not received adequate replacement security measures. Finally, the most current assessments of the 6 facilities on which USPS relied may not include adequate information regarding such key issues as the deterrent effect of the postal police presence on potential criminal incidents, the number of incidents postal police respond to at these facilities, and the capability of already burdened local police to respond to emergencies at these locations.

The USPS and USPIS have stated that some of the documents they provided in response

to our requests contain sensitive security information. For this reason, we are not providing this material to you directly; however, we will inform the Postmaster General that you will be requesting a copy of all the documents previously provided to us. We ask that you review these materials, and other information which may be available to you, to determine whether they support the USPS actions to remove postal police from these 6 locations (and others in the past). If you encounter any problems in obtaining the relevant documents from the USPS, please contact us or our staff.

We appreciate your assistance with this matter. Please feel free to contact Susan Propper of Senator Lieberman's staff at (202) 224-6599 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman

Sen. Christopher J. Dodd

Sen. Maria Cantwell

Sen. Patty Murray

Rep. Rosa De Lauro

Rep. John B. Larson

cc: John E. Potter, Postmaster General
Lee R. Heath, Chief Postal Inspector