



December 7, 2022

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senator
Mickey Leland Federal Building
1919 Smith Street, Suite 9047
Houston, Texas 77002

The Honorable Randy Weber
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
350 Pine Street, Suite 730
Beaumont, Texas 77701

Dear Senator Cruz and Congressman Weber:

Thank you for your November 11 correspondence on behalf of your constituents in the Fourteenth Congressional District and Southeast Texas. Please know the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) understands the seriousness of mail theft, and the impact it has on the American people and their trust in the U.S. Postal Service. We take our mission and responsibility to investigate fraud, waste, and abuse very seriously.

The OIG has jurisdiction to investigate any misconduct or crimes committed by Postal Service employees. In addition, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), which is the internal law enforcement arm of the Postal Service, investigates allegations of mail theft and mail fraud committed by external (non-employee) individuals. Mail theft cases are becoming more complex and time-consuming and typically involve external activity by groups of organized criminals, not just postal employees. OIG special agents frequently collaborate with postal inspectors and local law enforcement, as appropriate.

In response to your questions directed at the OIG, our Southern Area Field Office has received four allegations involving mail theft in the Galveston area since the beginning of FY 2022 (October 2021). By comparison, we completed 1,491 mail theft investigations nationwide in FY 2022. We made 427 arrests for mail theft, and our investigations resulted in 522 convictions and approximately \$6.4 million in fines, restitutions, and recoveries.

In the previous fiscal year, FY 2021, our office received 20 allegations of mail theft in the Galveston area. Three of these allegations involved checks stolen from a blue collection box and "washed," and we referred these to USPIS. Separately, our FY21 investigations in the Galveston area resulted in the removal of two postal employees for intentional delay of mail, one of whom was arrested.

The OIG Hotline is an important resource for members of the public to report fraud, waste, and misconduct, including possible criminal activity by postal employees.¹ We review the information received to identify systemic and criminal issues and potential areas for postal-wide

¹ See <https://www.uspsoig.gov/hotline>

reviews. Our Hotline received three complaints of mail theft in the past year from Galveston area residents, and those complaints were referred to our agents for review and investigation.

We have also begun recent audit work to address concerns about mail theft, specifically focused on checks, credit cards, and other sensitive documents. The OIG's audit will assess the Postal Service's response to mail theft by reviewing mail theft complaints and cases for a sample of locations nationwide; and we will focus on the greater Houston, TX area as part of our work.² We will keep you and your staff updated on the progress of this audit.

The OIG will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to identify and hold responsible those who take advantage of the public's trust in our postal system. Sending and receiving mail without fear of it being delayed or stolen is critical to an effective Postal Service.

Thank you again for contacting the OIG. If you have questions related to this inquiry, please contact Jennifer Daehn, Government Relations Specialist.

Sincerely,

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Vernessa Medina
Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations

² See Upcoming Audit Work, U.S. Postal Service's Response to Mail Theft, *available at* <https://www.uspsoig.gov/upcoming-audits>