

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2026

David Steiner
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Benjamin Kuo
Senior Vice President of Facilities and Infrastructure
United States Postal Service
Office of the Consumer Advocate
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Carissa Shea
District Manager, MA-RI
United States Postal Service
25 Dorchester Ave, RM 4003
Boston, MA 02205

Dear Postmaster General Steiner, Vice President Kuo, and District Manager Shea,

We write to urge the United States Postal Service (USPS) to immediately halt the planned closure of the Shutesbury Post Office in Shutesbury, MA and continue negotiations with the site's property owner in good faith. The sudden and unexpected announcement that the Shutesbury Post Office will suspend operations on June 6, 2026 has alarmed town officials and residents and poses significant challenges for this small and rural community in Western Massachusetts.

According to the notice taped to the door of the Shutesbury Post Office on May 6, 2026, USPS characterizes the suspension as a temporary closure due to complications with the building's lease. However, the memorandum neither explains how USPS is planning to mitigate this challenge nor what steps it is taking to preserve or restore service within Shutesbury. In response to our outreach, on May 20, 2026 USPS informed us that it will resume negotiations with the property owner, which we find encouraging. We urge USPS to negotiate in good faith to

maintain adequate postal service in Shutesbury. In the meantime, we implore USPS to immediately halt plans to close the location.

USPS's plan to shift Shutesbury postal service to the Leverett Post Office is neither an adequate nor acceptable long-term alternative. Franklin County, home to both Shutesbury and Leverett, is the most rural county in Massachusetts. Shutesbury residents rely on their post office for essential deliveries, including life-saving prescription medications, necessary household goods, and financial and legal documents. Some Shutesbury residents, whose properties are too remote to qualify for home delivery, must maintain local P.O. boxes to stay connected. For these residents, having to travel over ten miles round-trip to Leverett effectively denies them access to adequate postal services and would amount to a failure by USPS to abide by its Universal Service Obligation.

Town officials have rightfully raised concerns that USPS is potentially violating federal statutes and regulations by suspending its service in Shutesbury without following proper procedures. The Postal Reorganization Act mandates that USPS provide a minimum of 60 days' public notice prior to a proposed closure or consolidation.¹ The notice must include a written proposal evaluating the effects of the closure on the community.² USPS must also provide meaningful opportunity for community members to comment on the proposal and appeal, including by holding a community meeting to gather public input.³ In Shutesbury, customers received notice only thirty days prior to the proposed closure. USPS has conveyed no information to the town regarding residents' rights to provide public comment or to appeal its closure decision, nor has USPS sought any community input.

Although USPS can temporarily suspend services at a post office in certain emergencies, the conditions for an emergency suspension do not appear to be present here, where the lease termination was not particularly sudden or unexpected. Even in covered emergencies, USPS personnel are expected to conduct an initial feasibility study. In situations where "public input cannot be sought sufficiently in advance of the end date of the lease or rental agreement," federal regulations explicitly recommend that USPS personnel "should endeavor, to the extent possible, to continue operation of the USPS-operated retail facility for the duration necessary to gather public input and make a more fully informed decision on whether to proceed with a discontinuance proposal."⁴

We welcome the recent news that, following outreach from our offices, the American Postal Workers Union, and the community, USPS has indicated it will work to restart lease negotiations with the goal of renewing or extending the current lease.

¹ 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(1).

² *Id.* § 404(d)(2), (3).

³ 39 C.F.R. § 241.3.

⁴ *Id.* § 241.3(a)(5)(iv).

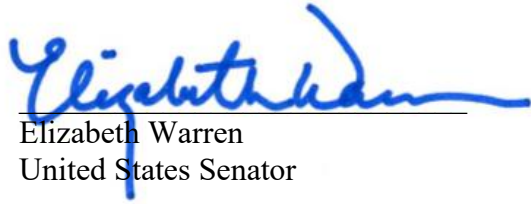
Given the unique and rural nature of Shutesbury, the disproportionate impact on town residents' access to service, and concerns regarding USPS's compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, we respectfully urge that USPS withdraw the temporary closure notice as the negotiations move forward. We also urge USPS to maintain uninterrupted service at the Shutesbury Post Office and ensure that all USPS employees receive the same pay and hours during this process.

We ask that you provide our offices with an update on this process by May 28, 2026. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress