

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2023

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service

Mr. Robert D. Carr
Postmaster
United States Postal Service, San Antonio

Mr. DeJoy and Mr. Carr,

We write to raise our concerns regarding access to cold water for San Antonio letter carriers while on their delivery routes. We are concerned that the United States Postal Service (USPS) has recently stopped providing water bottles to our letter carrier constituents during this historic heat wave. This heat is particularly dangerous for letter carriers, who do not have air conditioning in their vehicles and therefore endure even higher temperatures in their vehicles than outdoors.¹ We ask that you immediately create a plan to ensure letter carriers have access to cold water and are safe while on their routes.

Across the country and in Texas, extreme heat is putting workers at risk of injury and death. In San Antonio, we have broken multiple heat records, and this July we reached a daily average high of 100.7 degrees.² Furthermore, San Antonians called in a record number of heat exhaustion emergencies recently.

Our constituents have told us that before this heat wave, USPS provided water bottles for letter carriers to take on their long shifts that regularly reach 10 hours. Without access to water bottles, letter carriers often need to stop at stores to buy more water and ice out of their own pocket. Unfortunately, many letter carriers report they can be penalized for stopping to get more water and ice and take a break while on their route. While many USPS stations have water fountains, letter carriers say they are not allowed to, or are unable to, return to their station to refill their water bottles. Additionally, letter carriers lack a way to keep their water cold enough to remain drinkable throughout the day.

¹ <https://www.kxxv.com/were-trapped-in-these-trucks-all-day-us-postal-service-carrier>

² <https://www.expressnews.com/san-antonio-weather/forecast/article/san-antonio-weather-august-near-record-heat-18272639.php>

Before, letter carriers would often freeze the provided disposable bottles and drink them throughout their route. Letter carriers do not have a practical way to keep their refillable bottles cold while on their routes in 100-plus degree heat. The public servants who deliver our mail should be safe on the job without facing retaliation or continuing to spend more and more out of their own pocket.

We ask that you immediately prioritize a solution for letter carriers.

Instead of removing cold water from employees during this dangerous heat wave, we ask that you create a plan to ensure that letter carriers are permitted to:

- Take necessary breaks from the heat without retaliation.
- Access cold water without having to pay out of pocket.
- Visit a store or return to the station to pick up water bottles without penalty.

Letter carriers provide an essential service to our community and do so with diligence and determination. They deserve the resources that they need to do their job safely. We strongly encourage you to reverse your recent decision to cut water bottles for San Antonio letter carriers. Please also ensure that letter carriers across Texas and in other communities with high heat are provided the water and breaks they need.

Sincerely,



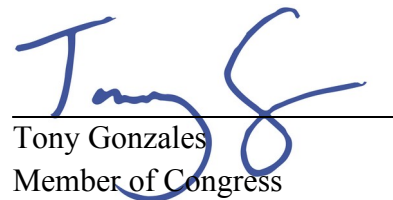
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress