

DIRECTORS' PERSPECTIVES

WHERE THE RSF BOARD EXPLORES CURRENT APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF HENRY GEORGE'S TEACHINGS.

DEMOCRACY AND ANTI-POSTAL POLICY

BY: FRED FOLDVARY

The roots of the current threats to American democracy stem ultimately from the concept of mass democracy, a policy that has always been vulnerable to corruption. Now, with the epidemic resulting in a greater use of mailed ballots, while the president is opposed to postal voting, and his appointee mandating postal slow-downs, democracy itself is threatened. But this problem is much greater than merely the uncertain mail delivery. This essay will start with the postal threats, then dig into the inherent dysfunctions of mass democracy, and then lay out the remedy.

As reported in the summer of 2020, the United States Postal Service is undergoing changes that are slowing mail delivery. These changes include the removal of mail collection boxes and sorting machines, as well as the reduction of overtime work and the elimination of the mandate and priority to deliver mail as quickly as possible.

An example of the damage done is the death of poultry chicks due to the postal delay. The USPS rules allow the mailing of live day-old birds, to be delivered within 72 hours of the time of hatching. But a KRON4 report on Aug. 9, 2020, stated, "Mail delay blamed for uptick in turkey chick deaths."

The USPS is administered by a Board of Governors, appointed by the president, with the consent of the Senate. The Governors select the Postmaster General. The president thus can thus control who runs the postal service, and thus determine the postal policies. This system is based on the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. Previously, the United States Post Office Department was a Cabinet department, headed by the postmaster general. Until recently, the USPS was non-political. But now, with the pandemic, voting by mail is more important, and there is a president who claims such voting is fraudulent.



The issue to be examined here is not about the current politicians and office holders, but about the system that generated the vulnerability of democracy to postal and anti-postal decisions. The first issue is why the postmaster general is a presidential appointment. The U.S. Constitution authorizes Congress "To establish post offices and post roads". Therefore Congress should be appointing the Postmaster, including the consent of both the House and the Senate.

But the broader and deeper issue is the vulnerability of the whole federal government to the corrupting influences of special interests, including the self-interests of the elected and appointed officials. This dysfunction is generated by the system of "mass democracy," voting by groups so large that the typical voter has no personal knowledge of the candidate and little personal access to his elected representatives.

Reader's
View



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