

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

February 18, 2020

Julian Johnson
Government Relations Representative
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 10802
Washington, DC 20260-3775

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Recent news reports detail discrimination toward customers at the Cesar Chavez Post Office, located at 1859 S. Ashland Avenue in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. While it is my understanding that the United States Postal Service (USPS) has initiated a formal investigation into the recent reports¹ of discrimination, I am concerned about reports that point to the existence of a larger issue at the Cesar Chavez Post office regarding the treatment of and accommodations for non-English speaking customers. I urge USPS to move swiftly to investigate the recent reports and issue findings and recommendations for corrective action as soon as possible.

Recent reports outline multiple complaints from community members² about discriminatory treatment of non-English speaking customers and missing translation-friendly signage, which are critical to explaining mail protocols for non-English speaking customers. Even more disturbing are reports that a USPS employee allegedly called the Chicago Police Department in response to several customers attempting to translate the conversation between the USPS employee and a Spanish-speaking customer. If true, this is an unacceptable and unjustifiable escalation. All USPS customers should have confidence that they will be treated with the utmost respect. Furthermore, Cesar Chavez Post Office is located in a predominantly non-English speaking neighborhood, so it is hard to understand why a plan was not in place for assisting non-English speaking customers as employees would likely be required to interact with non-English speaking customers on a regular basis.

I ask that the USPS keep my office informed of its review and provide a summary of the Postal Service's investigation when it is complete.

Additionally, I am requesting that the USPS answer the following questions:

1. Does the USPS have any plans to recruit and hire any bilingual Postal service staff to assist the Cesar Chavez Post Office in meeting the needs of the community? What

¹ <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2020/2/7/21128343/pilsen-post-office-spanish-speakers-byron-sigcho-lopez-jesus-chuy-garcia>

² <https://news.wttw.com/2020/02/11/report-pilsen-post-office-clerk-told-customers-speak-english>

other steps does USPS plan to do to assure non-English speaking customers can utilize the services at the post office?

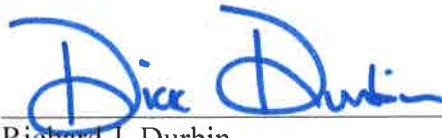
2. Are there plans for the USPS to conduct any community awareness or cultural sensitivity trainings for Postal Service employees at the Cesar Chavez Post Office?

I am a strong supporter of the United States Postal Service, however I am disappointed and concerned with the reporting surrounding the operations of the Cesar Chavez Postal Office. Similar to many neighborhoods in Chicago, Pilsen is a diverse, multi-cultural community and in order to effectively serve the people there, it is of the utmost importance that the Cesar Chavez Post Office reflects that.

Every customer is entitled to be treated fairly while having their postal needs met—especially by Postal Service employees, which serve a critical role in the public's life. I hope the USPS respects and understands the importance of this trust and the urgency surrounding the need to address these reports.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to a prompt response. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator