

OPINION | REVIEW & OUTLOOK

The Postal Service's Good Election Advice

This isn't sabotage. It's an attempt to avoid state election failure.

By [The Editorial Board](#)

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News broke Friday that the U.S. Postal Service has warned dozens of states, via letters from USPS General Counsel Thomas Marshall, that their deadlines “for requesting and casting mail-in ballots are incongruous with the Postal Service’s delivery standards.” On cue, Democrats and the press portrayed this as evidence of Trumpian sabotage and voter suppression.

In reality, it’s closer to the opposite: an attempt by the USPS to forestall state election failure. The letters were planned before the new Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, took the reins on June 15. Mr. Marshall sent nearly identical advice to election officials in a May letter posted at USPS.com. Strange public conspiracy.

“To account for delivery standards and to allow for contingencies (e.g., weather issues or unforeseen events), voters should mail their return ballots at least 1 week prior to the due date,” Mr. Marshall wrote in May. The same rule, he added, should apply to blank ballots: “The Postal Service also recommends that state or local election officials use FirstClass Mail and allow 1 week for delivery to voters.”

These guidelines are worth reiterating, given how states have bungled their recent primary elections. New York voters can request an absentee ballot using a mail application, which is valid if postmarked a week before Election Day. As a result of this lax deadline, plus a deluge of applications, roughly 30,000 ballots weren’t mailed to voters until June 22, a day before the primary election.