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The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

I write today to express my concern with the ongoing effort to dismantle and privatize the United States Postal Service (USPS). My constituents and I are concerned that the pilot Retail Partner Expansion Program, which has placed postal service retail counters inside select Staples locations since November, is an aggressive step toward privatization. The fact that the employees staffing the counters at Staples are not career postal employees is especially worrisome.

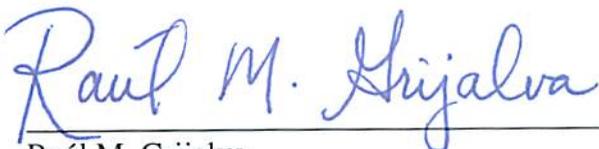
The press release issued by USPS on Nov. 14 announcing the launch of the Retail Partner Expansion Program reads in part: "The first of its kind, the USPS/Staples program offers access to postal products and services inside select local Staples stores. Once inside, customers will find a familiar looking counter resembling a mini post office containing the most popular postal products and services. Staples associates are fully trained to assist in all these services."

While these locations may offer similar products and services, they do not employ trained postal workers vital to the USPS mission. This "first of its kind" program is reminiscent of a program attempted in 1989, when USPS put full-service postal counters in select Sears Roebuck stores staffed by company employees. That effort led to a boycott by the American Postal Workers Union, whose President Moe Biller said the program "is nothing less than an attempt to replace us with a low-wage, non-union work force. [. . .] It is a classic example of how union-busting managers use privatization to try to crush trade unions for the benefit of profiteers."

Unfortunately, Mr. Biller was correct then and his words remain correct today. I am opposed to the Retail Partner Expansion Program pilot and any other effort to replace high-paying union jobs with non-union workers who are not career postal employees.

If this type of program continues at Staples and/or other retail stores, I respectfully request the employees staffing the postal service counters inside the retail stores be career postal employees.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress