



**Akron**  
Urban League

*Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.*

June 30, 2026

Director, Product Classification  
U.S. Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 4446  
Washington, DC 20260-5015

*Submitted via email to PCFederalRegister@usps.gov and via Regulations.gov*

**RE: Opposition to Proposed Rule — “Ballot Mail for Federal Elections,” Docket No. 2026–10968 (91 FR 32915)**

Dear Director:

The Akron Urban League submits these comments strongly opposing the U.S. Postal Service’s proposed rule on Ballot Mail for Federal Elections. As an affiliate of the National Urban League serving Greater Akron, our mission includes protecting equal access to the ballot for the communities we serve. The proposed rule would create new barriers to mail-in and absentee voting that most adversely affect the voters who rely on it the most—seniors, voters with disabilities, active-duty military members and their families, rural residents, and students. We strongly encourage the Postal Service to withdraw it.

The proposed rule would make the delivery of mail-in and absentee ballots dependent on states submitting voter-level lists to the federal government, require unique barcodes linked to individual voters, and authorize the Postal Service to return ballot mailings that do not match a federally maintained list. The Postmaster General has confirmed that, under this proposal, the Postal Service would refuse to mail ballots in states that do not provide such lists. This marks a significant departure from the agency’s long-standing role as a neutral carrier of election mail, and it risks delaying the timely delivery of ballots due to administrative matching processes entirely outside voters’ control. Because mail voting is time-sensitive, even short delays can cause lawfully cast ballots to arrive too late to be counted—potentially disenfranchising eligible voters through no fault of their own.

**The rule rests on legal authority that the federal courts have now rejected.**

On June 25, 2026, the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts (Talwani, J.) declared the central provisions of Executive Order 14399 unconstitutional—the very order the proposed rule cites as its basis—and prevented their enforcement during the 2026 election cycle. The court ruled that Sections 2 and 3 of the Order are legally void and prohibited federal agencies from relying on the Order to interfere with how states conduct mail voting. Importantly for this rulemaking, the court found that “no law enacted by Congress delegates authority to control mail-in voting to USPS,” and that the agency’s existing election guidance “is not binding on the States, merely recommended.” The court was clear on the constitutional issue: “The Constitution reserves the power to determine voter eligibility to the States alone. Neither the Executive Branch nor Congress may interfere with this power.”

A proposed rule whose authorizing order has been declared void, and whose subject matter a federal court has found to exceed the agency's statutory authority, cannot lawfully proceed. Finalizing it would invite immediate and well-founded legal challenges and would cause confusion among election officials and voters in the months before the November 2026 midterms.

**The Supreme Court has just reaffirmed that states—not the federal government—administer elections.**

On June 29, 2026, the Supreme Court of the United States decided *Watson v. Republican National Committee*, No. 24–1260, upholding a state's authority to count mail-in ballots cast and postmarked by Election Day but received afterward. Writing for the Court, Justice Barrett explained that the defining element of an election “has always been the electorate's choice of candidate,” and that “the electorate's choice is made when voting is complete, not when ballots are received.” The decision reaffirms the bedrock principle of federalism that governs this area: the Constitution leaves the administration of federal elections to the states and Congress. The proposed rule contradicts that principle by inserting the Postal Service into the role of gatekeeper over who receives a ballot and when—a role neither the Constitution nor any statute assigns to it.


**The rule is also unworkable and would disenfranchise eligible voters.**

Besides its legal issues, the proposal places significant, unfunded burdens on election officials within an impossible timeframe. Jurisdictions would have to redesign envelopes, create and send out unique barcodes, and submit voter data on a federal schedule—all within the few months before the general election and without dedicated funding. Smaller and rural offices are least capable of covering these costs. Any mismatch, mistake, or delay in the data could cause the Postal Service to refuse delivery of a ballot, turning routine administrative issues into lost votes. The Postal Service's traditional role is to deliver properly posted mail, not to determine voter eligibility; this proposal abandons that role, harming voters.

**Conclusion**

For these reasons, the Akron Urban League urges the Postal Service to withdraw the proposed rule in its entirety and to continue its longstanding practice of delivering all properly posted election mail. In light of the June 25, 2026, ruling voiding the executive order on which this rule depends, and the Supreme Court's June 29, 2026, reaffirmation of state authority over elections in *Watson v. Republican National Committee*, the lawful and prudent course is to abandon this rulemaking. We thank you for considering these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John M. Williams  
President and CEO