

From: Data for Progress and the Justice Collaborative Institute  
Re: Voters Demand Protection and Funding for the USPS  
Date: 09/02/2020

The Trump administration has [launched](#) an all-out assault on the United States Postal Service (USPS). As the New York Times is reporting, “at the direction of a Trump campaign megadonor who was [recently named the postmaster general](#), the service has stopped paying mail carriers and clerks the overtime necessary to ensure that deliveries can be completed each day.” And [Trump has made it clear](#) that he’s attacking the USPS to impede a free and fair election this November.

Trump’s attack on this public institution jeopardizes not only American’s ability to vote safely by mail in the midst of a pandemic, but also the delivery of life-saving prescription drugs payments for rent and health insurance, the shipments of so many small businesses, and [500,000 monthly social security checks](#). It’s a massive operation. In fiscal year 2019, the USPS [reported](#) that it “delivered 143 billion pieces of mail to 160 million delivery addresses and operated more than 31,000 Post Offices.” This is an essential service. As Democratic Senator Joe Manchin described in an [unflinching defense](#) of the USPS, many Americans, especially those who live in rural areas, depend on the USPS.

As part of an August survey, Data for Progress asked voters about their attitudes towards the USPS. We find that a clear majority of American voters:

- Identify mail delivery as an essential service and want it funded like the fire department, the military, and the highway system.
- Rely on the USPS regularly.
- Are concerned about Trump’s handling of the USPS.
- Support a Democratic proposal to provide the USPS \$25 billion in additional funding.

**By substantial margins, nearly all segments of voters prefer the USPS be funded as an essential service like the military, rather requiring it to cover its own costs like a business.**

We asked voters whether they think either the USPS should be funded as an essential service similar to the fire department, military, and highway system or that it should be required to cover its own costs like a stand-alone business. We found that a clear majority (58 percent) of voters

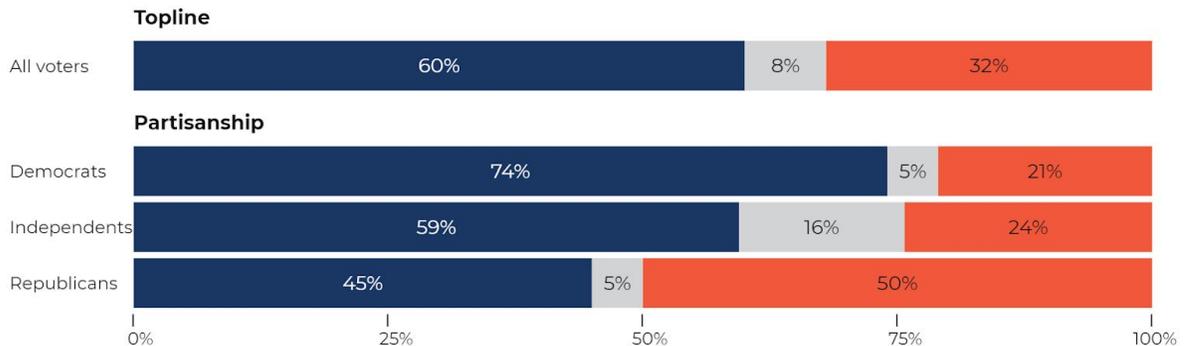
believe that USPS should be treated as an essential service, compared with only 31 percent of voters who believe it should be treated like a business.

Attitudes were loosely correlated with self-identified party affiliation:

- Democratic voters overwhelmingly want the USPS funded as an essential service (75 percent vs. 18 percent preferring it be treated as a business)
- A clear majority of Independent/third-party voters want the USPS funded as an essential service (52 percent vs. 28 percent).
- Republican voters were roughly split (43 percent vs. 48 percent).

## Voters Think The USPS Is An Essential Program That Should Be Treated As A Public Good

Which of the following most closely describes the way you think Congress should make decisions about the US Postal Service?

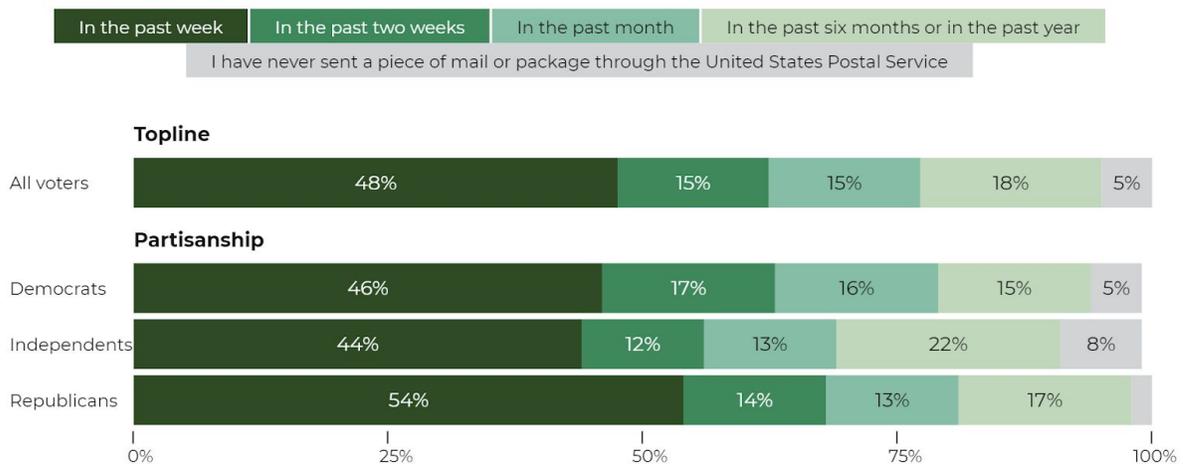


## A majority of voters have sent mail through the USPS in the past two weeks.

We first asked voters about their use of the postal service. Rates of use of the USPS are high. We find that a plurality of voters (42 percent) report that they've used the USPS to send mail or a package in the past week, and a majority of voters (56 percent) -- including a majority of those who self-identify as Democrats (63 percent) and Republicans (53 percent) -- report they've done so in the past two weeks. On the other end, only seven percent of voters reported that they've never sent mail or a package through the USPS.

## A Majority Of Voters Have Sent Mail Through The USPS In The Past Two Weeks

When did you last send a piece of mail or package through the United States Postal Service?



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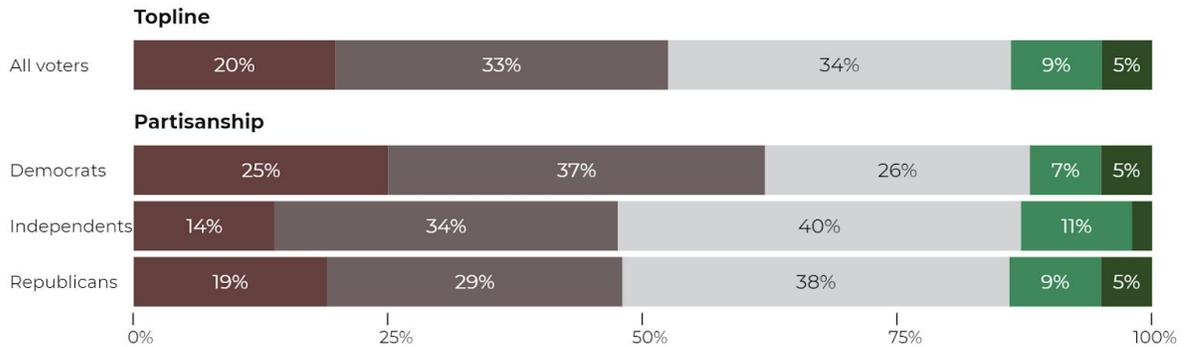
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## A plurality of voters of both parties think mail service has gotten worse in the past month, with 18 percent indicating a significant negative impact on their lives.

We then asked voters if they think that mail service quality has gotten worse over the past month. We find that a plurality (45 percent) say it has -- including 50 percent of Democrats and 43 percent of Republicans -- while only 12 percent of voters think it's improved. And 18 percent of voters report a decline in service with "a significant impact on my life" (including 20 percent of Democrats and 18 percent of Republicans).

# A Majority Of Voters Now Report That Mail Service Has Gotten Worse

Think about your experience sending and receiving mail and packages with the US Postal Service. Which of these statements best describes your experience over the past month compared to the prior year?



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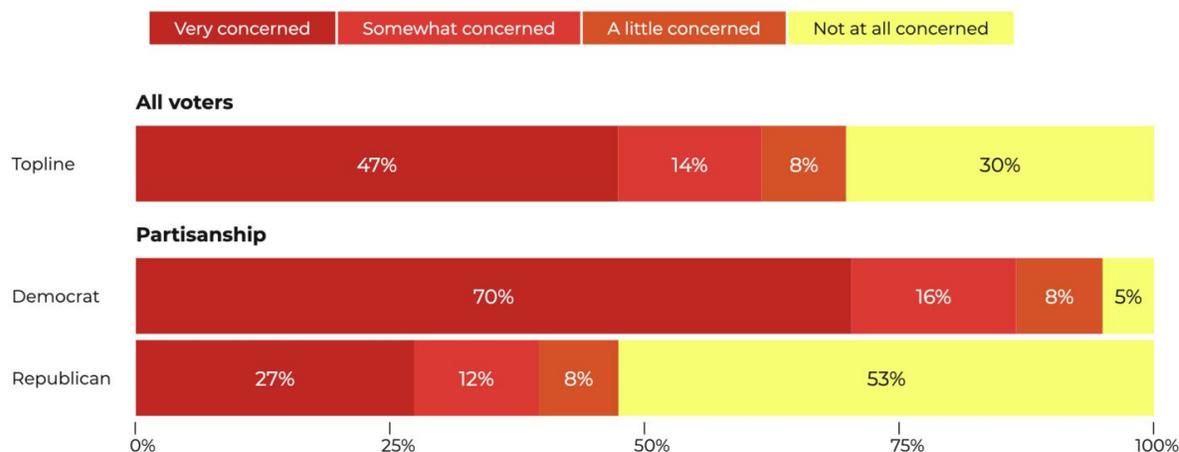
## Many voters are very concerned about Trump's appointment of a top donor to run the USPS

We then asked voters if they were concerned or not concerned about President Trump's appointment of top donor Louis DeJoy to the position of Postmaster General, and the effect this may have on the upcoming election in which many voters submit their ballots via the mail. We find that a plurality (47 percent) of voters report they're "very concerned."

Attitudes are correlated with partisanship. Seventy percent of Democrats say they're very concerned. But we note that even among Republicans, 27 percent say they, too, are "very concerned."

## Voters Are Very Concerned About Trump's Appointment Of A Top Donor To Be Postmaster General

How concerned or not concerned are you that President Trump appointed one of his top donors as Postmaster General just months before an election that will rely heavily on vote-by-mail?



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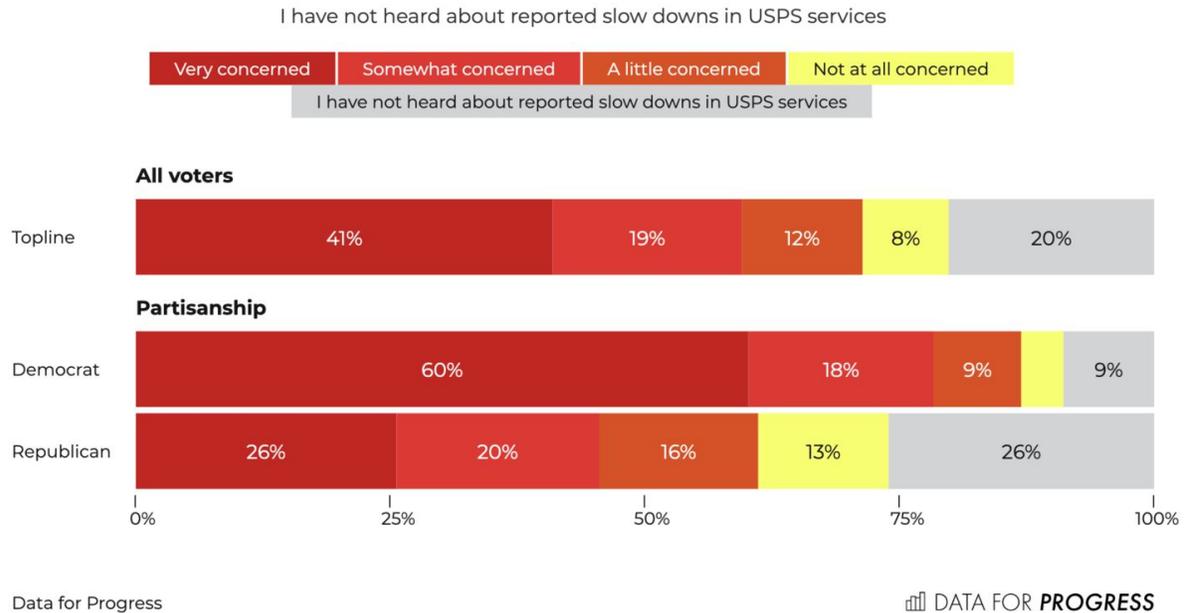
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### Voters are concerned about reported slow-downs in USPS service

We then asked voters if they're concerned or not concerned about reported slow downs in USPS service. We find that a plurality (41 percent) of voters say they're very concerned. This includes an overwhelming majority (60 percent) of Democrats and a thin plurality (26 percent) of Republicans.

We further find that some of this partisan difference is due to awareness -- only nine percent of Democrats say they haven't heard of these reported slow downs, while twenty-six percent of Republicans say they haven't heard about these reports. When we remove those who haven't heard about the slow-downs, the portion of Republicans describing themselves as "very concerned" grows to 35 percent.

# Voters Are Concerned About Reported Slow Downs In USPS Service

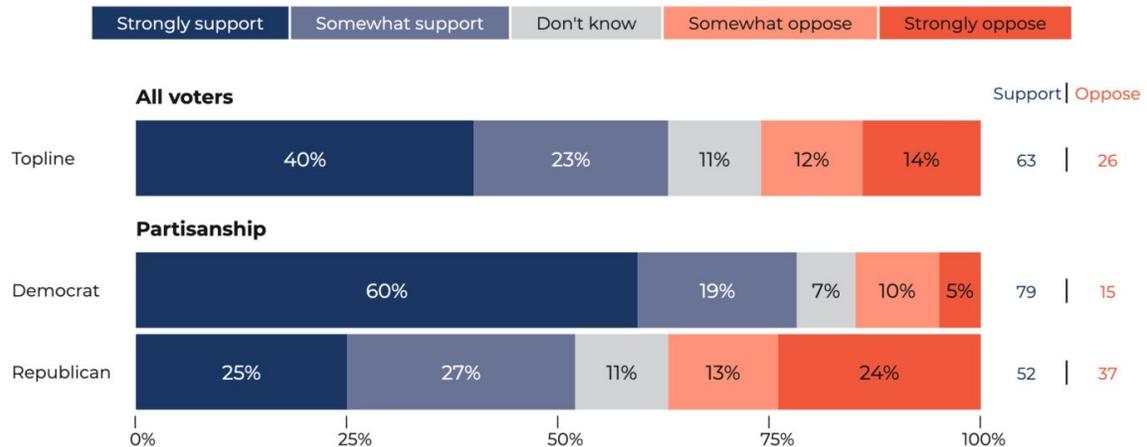


## Voters support providing the USPS with \$25 billion as part of a Coronavirus relief bill.

Lastly, we asked voters whether they would support or oppose providing \$25 billion in funding for the USPS as part of a coronavirus relief bill. (This is the figure Democrats included in the HEROES act which passed the House in May, and has been blocked by Republicans in the Senate.) Trump has said that he'd [oppose this](#) -- though he's backtracked slightly saying [he'd consider signing](#) such a bill if Democrats offer concessions. We find that voters support this funding by a decisive margin: it's backed by a 37-point margin across all voters (63 percent support, 26 percent oppose). Democrats support it by a 64-point margin while Republicans do so by a 15-point margin.

# Voters Support Providing The USPS \$25 Billion In Funds

Would you support or oppose Congress providing \$25 billion dollars to the United States Postal Service as part of a coronavirus relief bill to help them update and digitize their infrastructure?



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## The USPS must be defended

Voters rely on and support the USPS. This institution is, as writer Eric Levitz [describes](#), “the midwife of America’s democracy, and the first triumph of its federal state...”:

...a force of national unification and democratization that testified to the government’s capacity to expedite and guide economic development with an eye towards the citizenry’s collective benefit.

Its continued functionality will be crucial both for the fair conduct of the upcoming election, and for the services on which so many lives depend. It handles more mail in 16 days than FedEx and UPS do combined in a [year](#); and it provides good union jobs and a path to the middle class [for many, especially Black Americans](#). It must be defended.

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**Ethan Winter** ([@EthanBWinter](#)) is an analyst at Data for Progress.

**Benjamin Rahn** ([@brahn](#)) is on sabbatical from software engineering at Stripe\*, and is a founder and director of ActBlue\*.

(\*Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.)

You can email the authors at [ethan@dataforprogress.org](mailto:ethan@dataforprogress.org) and [brahn@dataforprogress.org](mailto:brahn@dataforprogress.org).

## **Methodology**

*From August 13 through August 14, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,143 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is +/- 2.7 percentage points.*