

The Bipartisan Postmaster General Act

Overview

The nomination clause was one of the last provisions agreed to by the Constitutional Convention due to the concerns of allocation of power. The participation of both the President and the Senate in the nomination process ensures a balance of powers. For the first nearly 200 years of our existence as a country, the U.S. Senate played an integral role in the selection of Postmaster General. Up until 1970, the Postmaster General was selected by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Background

In a period of deregulation, when railroads and airlines saw reorganization and a relinquishing of federal control, the postal service was just one of many government institutions that were fundamentally changed. In 1970, President Nixon signed into law the Postal Reorganization Act that effectively abolished the United States Post Office Department, whose Secretary was part of the Presidential Cabinet, and created the United States Postal Service (USPS), a quasi-government agency authorized as the official mail-carrier of the United States. When establishing USPS, the federal government relinquished its power of the Postal Service to the Board of Governors, including its power to approve the Postmaster General.

Though the Senate confirms the members of the Board of Governors, the lack of transparency we have seen from USPS and their Board calls into question Congress's ability to conduct oversight. The Board has declined to provide essential information on how the Postmaster General was even selected. The American public deserve a transparent selection process, not decisions made in smoke-filled rooms.

When Postmaster General Louis DeJoy was appointed by the Board of Governors in June 2020, he began to quickly implement seemingly politically-charged changes that could adversely affect the reliability of mail deliveries, overtime pay, and operational hours of postal facilities. USPS has always been an apolitical institution, and it appears necessary for Congress to step in and ensure the position of Postmaster General remains an apolitical position.

The Bill

The bill would simply restore the nomination process of Postmaster General to the intentions of the founding fathers. Under this bill, the President shall submit his nominee to the Senate for their advice and consent, and the Senate will be required to confirm the nomination with a three-fifths majority to ensure strong, bipartisan support for the next Postmaster General.