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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND  
FORCES  
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,  
FOREST AND PUBLIC LANDS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

March 13, 2012

Chairman Darry Issa  
House Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform  
Rayburn 2157  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Elijah Cummings  
House Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform  
Rayburn 2471  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Dennis Ross  
House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce,  
U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy  
Rayburn 2157  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Steven Lynch  
House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce,  
U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy  
Rayburn 2471  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, Chairman Ross and Ranking Member Lynch,

Throughout our history, great Americans have fought – and sometimes died – to secure our voting rights. The right to vote is paramount in our representative democracy, allowing citizens to choose who amongst their fellow Americans will speak for them in government.

It is this fundamental right that is now in jeopardy because of post office mail processing center closings this year. My fellow Californians depend on the mail to deliver their votes in a timely manner.

I stand with California's Secretary of State Debra Bowen in delaying the closure of mail processing facilities until at least after the November 2012 elections. The United States Postal Service (USPS) plays a vital role in California's electoral process. Nearly 6 million Californians voted by mail in 2008 presidential election. In the June 2010 statewide primary, 58 percent of all votes came through the mail. In the November 2010 general election, a record 4.9 million vote-by-mail ballots were cast.

The USPS has closed four processing centers in the state since 2008 and plans to close 14 more. County registrars say the closures already have had an effect. Secretary of State Bowen states that mailed ballots took from five-to-seven days to arrive at county election offices during last year's local elections in areas that lost distribution centers, rather than the normal one-to-three days. The President of California's County Clerks Association, Gail Pellerin, said postal cutbacks had delayed ballot delivery and were a major reason some vote-by-mail ballots went uncounted

during elections last year. President Pellerin said she has noticed that some voters have begun using private package companies such as FedEx to overnight their ballots.

The people of California must have their voices heard. The closure of mail processing centers before the November 2012 election will silence tens of thousands of our fellow Americans in California alone.

We are a nation that takes voting rights seriously. We are a nation that believes democracy is worth paying for. I oppose the closing of these facilities because they help make representative democracy possible. I hope you'll join me in preventing voter disenfranchisement by using the powers of this Committee and the United States Congress to prevent further mail processing center closures until after the November 2012 elections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Garamendi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

John Garamendi  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS