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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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May 15, 2002

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing in regards to a Department of Labor regulation that could result in the closure of local post offices.

As you may know Safeway operates 1,500 stores nationwide, and in ten of those stores they lease space to the United States Postal Service for the operation of local post offices. One of these ten post offices happens to be in the city of Tumwater, in my home state of Washington. This location has been readily accessible to the citizens of Tumwater for the past 35 years.

Because Safeway leases space to the Postal Service in ten stores, it subjects all their operations to the federal contracting standards. The potential cost of the government paper work and potential audits for the 1,500 stores, is prohibitive for the company. That is why, barring an exemption from the government contracting standards for the other 1,490 stores, Safeway is planning to close the ten post offices.

It is my hope that the Department of Labor would re-evaluate how they are apply government contracting rules to Safeway, and reach a compromise that allows the contracting standards to be applied only to the ten stores with post offices. Unfortunately, if we are not able to reach some compromise on this issue the city of Tumwater will lose a local post office.

Thank you very much for listening to my concerns. I look forward to working with you on a way to keep the Tumwater Post Office operating.

Sincerely,

  
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress