

Released:
Monday, September 10, 2012

Contact:
PATRICK MURRAY
732-263-5858 (office)
732-979-6769 (cell)
pdmurray@monmouth.edu

NATIONAL: PUBLIC OK WITH PRIVATIZED POST OFFICE

One-third would use more often if services available in supermarkets

Few Americans would be overly concerned if the United States Postal Service was privatized to save money, according to the latest national *Monmouth University Poll*. While most Americans are very satisfied with the service they currently receive, one-third say they would be more likely to use these services if made available in more convenient settings.

The US Postal Service is considering a number of service reductions to deal with looming deficits. Most Americans say that these proposed changes would not impact their use of the USPS. However, among those who would be impacted, more say they would be less likely to use the post office for their mailing needs.

Specifically, 75% say their use of the USPS would not change if post offices were closed on Saturdays. Among the remainder, 15% would use the post office less often while 8% say they would actually try to use the post office more often if it were closed on Saturday.

Similarly, 66% of Americans would not be affected if their post office reduced its weekday hours of operation. Among the remainder, 20% would use the post office less often while 11% say they would actually try to use the post office more often if weekday hours were cut.

On the other hand, if postal services, such as mailing packages and purchasing money orders, were made available in places like supermarkets and pharmacies, 1-in-3 (33%) Americans say they would be more likely to use these services. This compares to 14% who would use the USPS less often and 51% whose use would not be affected by the change in service availability. It's worth noting that over 4-in-10 (43%) people who currently use non-USPS carriers to ship packages report being more likely to use USPS if its shipping services were available in local supermarkets and pharmacies.

The poll also found that half the country would not be bothered (50%) if the US Postal Service, including counter services and home delivery, was privatized as a cost cutting measure. This compares to 4-in-10 who would be bothered by such a move, including 28% who would be bothered a lot and 12%

who would be bothered a little. Among regular users of the USPS, 44% would be bothered either a lot or a little compared to 47% who would not be bothered if the USPS was privatized.

“The public appears to be ambivalent about the United States Postal Service. Americans overwhelmingly like the services provided by their local post office, but few seem concerned by either a potential reduction in services or the possibility of turning over the entire operation to a private entity. This is partly a generational issue, as younger adults are more likely to seek out alternatives for paying bills and shipping packages,” said Patrick Murray, director of the New Jersey-based Monmouth University Polling Institute.

About 3-in-4 (74%) Americans say they are very satisfied with the service provided by their local USPS mail carrier and another 19% are somewhat satisfied. Only 3% are dissatisfied. Nearly 2-in-3 (64%) are very satisfied with the service provided by the counter staff at their local post office and another 24% are somewhat satisfied. Only 8% are dissatisfied with this aspect of the US Postal Service. Residents who visit their local post office regularly (72%) are more likely than less frequent visitors (55%) to be very satisfied with the counter service they receive.

A majority (54%) of residents report making regular trips to their local post office, including 20% who do so weekly and 34% at least once a month. Another 26% do so a few times a year, 12% less often and 7% never. There are some differences by age, with residents age 55 and over (64%) or between the ages of 35 and 54 (58%) being more likely than younger adults 18 to 34 (40%) to visit a post office regularly.

Fully 6-in-10 (61%) Americans tend to use the US Postal Service when shipping packages. UPS (22%) and FedEx (12%) are the next most popular choices. There is an age gap on shipping preference. Two-thirds (68%) of those age 35 and older choose the post office to ship packages compared to less than half (45%) of those under the age of 35.

The survey also found, though, that a significant number of Americans have switched to electronic bill payments. Nearly half report that they pay all (29%) or most (16%) of their bills electronically now. Just 3-in-10 still rely on traditional mail for paying all (21%) or most (10%) of their household bills. Another 18% say they use both methods equally. Younger adults under the age of 35 are much more likely to pay their bills electronically (57%) rather than by mail (16%). Those age 35 to 54 are also more likely to choose electronic payment (49%) over sending a check in the mail (31%). Only adults age 55 and older prefer the mail (45%) to electronic bill payment (31%).

The latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 819 adult Americans from August 15 to 19, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.4 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. How often do you visit a US Post Office to buy stamps, send packages or do other business – at least once a week, at least once a month, a few times a year, rarely, or never?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
At least once a week	20%	14%	20%	26%	37%	0%	24%	14%
At least once a month	34%	26%	38%	38%	63%	0%	37%	30%
A few times a year	26%	30%	28%	22%	0%	58%	27%	25%
Rarely	12%	19%	11%	8%	0%	27%	9%	18%
Never	7%	12%	3%	6%	0%	15%	3%	12%

[QUESTIONS 2 and 3 WERE ROTATED]

2. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the service provided by your local Post Office’s front counter?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
Very satisfied	64%	64%	63%	66%	72%	55%	70%	55%
Somewhat satisfied	24%	25%	25%	21%	20%	29%	22%	27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	7%	4%	5%
Very dissatisfied	3%	1%	4%	4%	4%	2%	2%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	6%	4%	3%	1%	8%	2%	8%

3. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the service provided by the local mail carrier who delivers to your home or business?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
Very satisfied	74%	72%	74%	75%	76%	70%	77%	68%
Somewhat satisfied	19%	22%	18%	17%	16%	22%	18%	22%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	4%
Very dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	2%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%	5%

[QUESTIONS 4 TO 6 WERE ROTATED]

4. If local Post Offices were closed on Saturday, would you be more likely or less likely to use the US Postal Service for your mailing needs, or wouldn't it affect how much you use the postal service?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
More likely	8%	11%	7%	7%	9%	7%	9%	7%
Less likely	15%	23%	12%	11%	13%	17%	14%	17%
Wouldn't affect	75%	63%	79%	81%	76%	73%	76%	73%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%

5. If local Post Offices reduced the number of hours they were open during weekdays, would you be more likely or less likely to use the US Postal Service for your mailing needs, or wouldn't it affect how much you use the postal service?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
More likely	11%	15%	8%	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%
Less likely	20%	26%	19%	15%	20%	20%	18%	23%
Wouldn't affect	66%	56%	72%	70%	65%	68%	69%	62%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%

6. If Post Office services such as mailing packages and postal money orders were available at places like supermarkets and pharmacies, would you be more likely or less likely to use these services for your mailing needs, or wouldn't it affect how much you use the postal service?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
More likely	33%	39%	35%	27%	30%	37%	29%	43%
Less likely	14%	11%	12%	18%	16%	10%	14%	14%
Wouldn't affect	51%	50%	52%	52%	51%	51%	56%	41%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%

7. Would it bother you or not bother you if US postal services, including counter services and home delivery, were privatized as a way to save money? [If *BOTHER*, ASK: Would it bother you a lot or just a little?]

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
Bother a lot	28%	23%	28%	31%	32%	23%	34%	18%
Bother a little	12%	15%	8%	13%	12%	12%	10%	14%
Not bother	50%	55%	53%	42%	47%	53%	45%	59%
(VOL) Don't know	11%	6%	11%	14%	9%	13%	11%	9%

8. Thinking about your household bills, such as credit cards and utilities. Do you pay them by sending a check in the mail or by electronic payment, such as over the phone, on the internet or by automatic bank transfer, or do you do both? [If *BOTH*: Do you pay MOST of your bills by mail or electronically, or do you use each payment method about equally?]

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
ALL by mail	21%	10%	18%	35%	26%	16%	23%	18%
Both - MOST by mail	10%	6%	13%	10%	14%	6%	12%	7%
Both - EQUALLY	18%	21%	16%	18%	19%	16%	19%	16%
Both - MOST electronic	16%	19%	18%	12%	15%	19%	17%	16%
ALL electronic	29%	38%	31%	19%	22%	38%	25%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	3%	7%	4%	6%	4%	5%

9. When you send a package, which service do you use most often – FedEx, DHL, UPS, the US Postal Service, or something else?

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
US Postal Service	61%	45%	68%	67%	69%	52%	100%	0%
UPS	22%	32%	17%	19%	19%	26%	0%	62%
Fed Ex	12%	18%	11%	7%	9%	16%	0%	34%
DHL, other	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	3%
(VOL) Never send	3%	2%	2%	5%	2%	4%	0%	0%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on August 15 to 19, 2012 with a national random sample of 819 adults age 18 and older, including 602 via live interview on a landline telephone and 217 via live interview on a cell phone. Interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
24% Rep	49% Male	31% 18-34	68% White
33% Dem	51% Female	37% 35-54	11% Black
43% Ind		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			6% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	AGE			POST OFFICE USE		PREFERRED SHIPPER	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Regularly	Less often	USPS	Other
Unweighted N	819	201	267	342	462	355	507	278
moe	3.4%	6.9%	6.0%	5.3%	4.6%	5.2%	4.4%	5.9%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the entire nation. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

###