

By Jan Rahn

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The U.S. Postal Service has backed down from its plan to stop Saturday mail delivery. The plan would have taken effect Aug. 5—now things are going to remain the same through September.

Last Wednesday, April 10, the board of the postal service said mail will continue to be delivered six days a week—at least while postal reform legislation from Congress is waited upon.

In February, the agency had announced a plan to stop delivering mail on Saturdays, except for packages and express mail.

The decision last week by the postal was to stay the course because of a Congressional mandate for Saturday delivery that had been on the books since the 1980s. When Congress passed a funding measure last month to keep the government running, it was decided to keep that mandate. The Postal Service had been hoping Congress would strip that mandate out.

A statement released by the board said, “Although disappointed with this Congressional action, the board will follow the law and has directed the postal service to delay implementation of its new delivery schedule until legislation is passed that provides the postal service with the authority to implement a financially appropriate and responsible delivery schedule.”

Several lawmakers accused the agency of overstepping its legal authority when the postal service first announced its plan, according to a news release.

Last month, the U.S. Government Accountability Office sided with critics saying current law requires the agency to continue six-day delivery.

The U.S. Postal Service had said its plan would not violate the law, because it’s only changing six-day delivery—not ending it—since packages would continue to be delivered on Saturdays, said an associated press report.

Had the postal service ended delivery on Saturday as planned, it would have saved \$2 billion a year.

Because of a congressional mandate back in 2006, the postal service has to pre-fund health care benefits for future retirees—one cause for the money problems. Billions of dollars have been borrowed by the United States Postal Service from taxpayers to make up for the shortfalls.

Nowadays, many customers use technology to pay bills, leading to a decrease in first-class mail.

The postal service agency reported a loss of \$16 billion in 2012. It defaulted twice on payments totaling \$11 billion and exhausted a \$15 billion line of credit from the U.S. Treasury.