



January 3, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents over 150,000 federal employees in 33 agencies, I urge you to re-open the federal government and ensure that all federal workers receive back pay and a pay raise for 2019.

On this 13th day of the government shutdown it is imperative that Congress and the White House work together to open federal agencies. Over 800,000 federal employees are facing work and pay uncertainty. Whether they are furloughed or continue to report to duty, these employees are unpaid during this lapse in appropriations and congressional action is required to ensure they are paid once agencies are back to operating normally.

As this shutdown drags on, federal workers are becoming increasingly worried about when they will receive their next paycheck and how they will be able to pay their mortgage, rent, student loans, and credit card bills. On a daily basis we are hearing from anxious employees, including those at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Park Service, among others, who are pulling back on expenses, asking about unemployment, and stating that they will be unable to pay their government-issued credit card bills for official government purchases. Although the credit cards are used for government business, they are carried in the employee's name and have an imminent due date. All employees impacted by the shutdown, both furloughed employees and those still working and not getting paid, have the same immediate financial worries. It is imperative that the government re-open and provide back pay to these employees as soon as possible.

We are further concerned that some in the administration and in Congress do not recognize what it means for employees to go without pay. Shutdowns are hardest on those with the least means, who cannot float government purchases and live on savings while they go without several paychecks. The longer this shutdown lasts, the risk of workers missing their next paycheck moves closer to reality, and financial concerns will really escalate.

It is also troubling that over the holidays, while employees were worried and struggling to make ends meet, they were met with the President's action to formally implement a pay freeze for 2019. This is demoralizing and cruel. NTEU supports the bipartisan provision in the Senate-passed FY 2019 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill and in the legislative package that the House plans to consider today that provides federal workers on

average a 1.9 percent pay increase for 2019. Over the years, federal workers have seen their wages fall further behind the private sector, which has adversely impacted them and their families, as well as federal agencies who compete for skilled talent.

While a shutdown is personally concerning for employees, it is also problematic for agencies such as the IRS, which is gearing up for a complex tax filing season following enactment of the most extensive changes to the U.S. tax code in 30 years, and CBP, given its crucial security and trade and travel facilitation mission. We've already seen the impact the shutdown is having on the National Parks' ability to welcome visitors and keep our parks clean. Our economic security is also put at risk as agencies who help promote the economy are unable to help businesses grow and expand. The Securities and Exchange Commission, for example, is unable to bring enforcement actions or approve initial public offerings. This shutdown is not sustainable for employees or the American taxpayers who rely on government services.

As the 116th Congress begins today, I urge you today to support legislation to re-open the federal government, provide prompt back pay to impacted employees, and ensure that the wages of federal employees do not fall further behind those of the private sector by providing a 1.9 percent pay increase in 2019 for the dedicated federal employees who work on behalf of our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President