



February 12, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents over 150,000 federal employees in 33 agencies, I urge you to ensure that the federal government remains open and that all federal workers receive a pay raise in the final funding agreement.

With the current Continuing Resolution (CR) set to expire at midnight on this Friday, February 15th, it is imperative that Congress and the White House work together to keep federal agencies open. Following a 35-day shutdown that cost the United States economy \$11 billion, caused significant hardship for the 800,000 federal workers who missed two paychecks, and denied critical government services to the American people, it is crucial that a solution is found to avert another crisis.

During the 35-day shutdown, federal employees and their families struggled with how to pay their mortgage, rent, health care, utilities, student loans, and credit card bills. Every day, I heard from members who were terrified about how they would be able to get through this—how they would pay for their kid’s college tuition or for their ailing parent’s medical care. Creditors and landlords were unwilling to work with them and expected full and prompt payment of what was owed, despite the lack of a paycheck due to the shutdown. And those who were required to work without pay had limited to no ability to earn additional income with part-time work or obtain unemployment benefits. You have it in your power to ensure that this travesty does not happen again.

For years, Congress has been working to improve recruitment and retention at federal agencies, including for those individuals with hard to find critical skills. Making workers go without pay and implementing a pay freeze does nothing to help with this effort. Federal employees want to do their jobs. But they need to receive their pay. This includes timely paychecks for their work as well as a pay increase to keep up with the cost of living. Like all American workers and middle-class taxpayers, federal employees face ever-increasing costs of living, with rising utility, food and health care bills, along with school loan and rent or mortgage obligations. However, federal employees have seen their wages fall further behind the private sector, which has adversely impacted them and their families, as well as the federal agencies who compete for skilled talent. If the government shutters its doors just three weeks after the longest shutdown in history and denies federal workers a much-deserved pay increase for 2019, it could take years to restore the credibility of the federal government as a model employer and ensure that it can compete with the private sector for skilled workers.

Furthermore, another shutdown would have a significant impact on the services the American people expect from their government. For example, another shutdown would impact the IRS, which

has just started the tax filing season following enactment of the most significant change to the tax law in 30 years; it would impact the CBP's crucial border mission; it would impact the FDA's ability to protect the health and safety of consumers. In addition, another shutdown would negatively impact the mission of every other federal agency facing another lapse in appropriations.

As we approach the end of the current CR, I urge you to pass legislation keeping the government open and providing a pay raise for the dedicated federal employees who work on behalf of our nation.

Sincerely,



Anthony M. Reardon
National President