



**J. David Cox, Sr.**  
*National President*

**Augusta Y. Thomas**  
*NVP for Women & Fair Practices*

375608

January 18, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, which represents over 700,000 federal employees, I strongly urge the President and the Congress to: (1) avoid a federal government shutdown by approving a funding bill before January 19 when current funding expires; and (2) provide funding parity between defense and nondefense discretionary spending (NDD).

### **Avoid Federal Government Shutdown**

It is very clear that a federal government shutdown could inflict serious pain on everyday working people:

- More than 850,000 federal government employees could be furloughed without pay.
- More than one million federal government employees will be required to work without pay.
- More than 2 million military service members could see their pay delayed.
- More than 400 national parks, museums and zoos could close down.
- Almost 6 million small businesses could see financial support delayed with small business loan programs being shut down.
- Educational, compensation, and pension benefits for hundreds of thousands of veterans could be delayed.
- Applications for new Social Security benefits could be delayed and services for seniors significantly delayed as federal employees are furloughed and the processing of applications is slowed.

The last federal government shutdown – when non-essential workers were told to stay home – was in October, 2013. It lasted for 16 days. Although all employees were eventually paid, tens of thousands of federal employees who lived paycheck-to-paycheck were extremely stressed. The Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA Fund) literally ran out of money helping people pay their rent or mortgage, their utilities, or just to have enough money for food. (The FEEA Fund is the only independent 501(c)(3) organization devoted solely to providing emergency financial assistance to federal and postal employees and their families.)

### **Provide Equal Increase in Funds for Defense and Non-Defense Spending**

AFGE fully supports increases in Department of Defense funding that enhance readiness. But we also believe that NDD funding should not be further eviscerated to achieve that goal. Under current law, the across the board cuts under sequestration are evenly divided between defense and non-defense spending and so should relief from sequestration. That is why the three prior times that Congress has granted relief from sequestration, it has provided equal increases for defense and non-defense. In addition, it should be noted that even with sequester relief, non-defense spending is falling to historic lows and thereby forcing deep cuts in critical services on which the American people rely. For example, the



Environmental Protection Agency budget has been cut by almost one-third and is jeopardizing the agency's mission to safeguard the quality of our water and air. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is facing a cut of as much as \$492 million. SSA provides direct, personal assistance to millions of Americans every year who are applying for benefits. Over the past seven years, budget cuts have already resulted in an inflation adjusted 16% reduction in funds available to provide these essential services. A cut of this magnitude will cripple the Agency's ability to carry out its mission to help beneficiaries get the benefits they deserve.

In conclusion, we urge the President and Congress to keep the federal government open and provide the necessary resources so that agencies can provide the services which the American people expect and rely on. Thank you for considering our views and please do not hesitate to contact Alan Kadrofske (202-639-4000) [alan.kadrofske@afge.org](mailto:alan.kadrofske@afge.org) or Thomas Kahn (202-639-6404) [tom.kahn@afge.org](mailto:tom.kahn@afge.org) in our legislative Department if you have any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. David Cox, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

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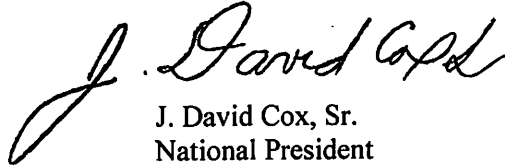
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