



Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National Secretary-Treasurer

J. David Cox, Sr.
National President

Jeremy A. Lannan
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

January 7, 2019

Dear President Trump:

This government shutdown must stop immediately. With all due respect Mr. President, I ask that you tell the Senate that you will sign and they should pass the House appropriation bills. End the partial shutdown of our government along with the lockout of 380,000 government employees and the *forced labor without pay* of another 420,000 government employees.

You have said repeatedly that the government workers support you on the partial shutdown. Nothing could be further from the truth. Some of our members voted for Hilary Clinton and, yes, some voted for you. But, with the exception of a tiny handful, federal workers are united in opposition to the shutdown, the lockout, and their forced labor without pay. They want to be back providing vitally important services to their fellow Americans and *they want to be paid*.

On top of the devastating impact of the shutdown, you have told all federal workers that they and their work were not deserving of a pay raise this year, cancelling the modest pay increase scheduled for 2019. No raise for 2 million middle class workers and their families. No raise for middle class workers while you gave all the billionaires and the biggest global corporations \$1.4 trillion in tax cuts. No raise for workers who make from \$15,000 to \$60,000 a year.

Taken together, the shutdown and the canceled pay raise are devastating for the federal workforce. But it is not just our federal workers who are feeling the pain. Children are going without nutritional assistance. Families cannot close on mortgages. Small business cannot get loans. Closing the national parks is a disgrace. FEMA is unavailable to help with a disaster. Shutting down the IRS will hurt government revenues and frustrate Americans and businesses alike who want and need to file their taxes now. And all that is before taking into account the blow this will mean to local economies across the nation when our members have no money to spend. The last shutdown cost the economy over \$24 billion. The toll of this one is likely to be far higher.

You have stated that your reason for the shutdown is a matter of national security. Yet, the real world impact of your actions undermines national security. Your shutdown hurts America and hurts Americans.

- Not paying correctional officers guarding the inmates in federal prisons does not help national security;
- Not paying already low-paid TSA officers will not help national security;
- Not paying Border Patrol Agents does not help national security;
- Not paying the FBI, the Federal Air Marshals, the Secret Service, the Coast Guard, and the Air Traffic Controllers does not help national security; and,
- Not paying our meat and poultry inspectors to protect our food does not help national security.





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You said you would be proud to shut down the government. Well I say, Mr. President, that you should be *ashamed*. All of these Americans show up every day, work hard – often at great personal risk – to make our country safe and secure. Instead of praising these upstanding Americans, you have stopped their paychecks and you have cancelled their modest pay raise. They have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, Mr. President, and we demand nothing less.

AFGE and the nation are left to wonder why you are doing this. You have essentially admitted that you are using federal workers as a bargaining chip to force Congress to fund the wall you want at the southern border. You scarcely need to be reminded that you promised Mexico would pay for that wall. Let us be clear, Congress has provided money for decades to keep improving over 650 miles of physical barriers on the southern border. Congress has authorized and paid for helicopters and the use of cameras and drones. Congress has authorized money for more Border Patrol Agents as well, but you have not used it. There are fewer Border Patrol Agents today than when you took office despite Congress providing the resources. I know because we supported those efforts for more agents.

In December you had said you were okay with \$1.3 billion in money for border security. That is why the Senate passed it in December in an overwhelming, bipartisan vote. That is what the House just passed again. You could have signed it, but you reversed course. You can still sign it. Just tell Senator McConnell to bring the bills to the floor and end this insanity.

Do the right thing Mr. President. Stop holding the government, the 800,000 federal workers and their families, and the American people hostage. I urge you to change course without delay. End the partial shutdown, the lockout, and the unpaid forced labor. End it now.

Respectfully yours,

J. David Cox, Sr.
National President

