



January 10, 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 reopen the federal government and ensure that all federal workers receive back pay and a pay raise for 2019.

Parts of the federal government have now been shut down for 20 days. One week ago, the 116th Congress convened, but no action has been taken in the Senate since then to address the issue. Over 800,000 federal employees are now officially missing a paycheck and are struggling with how they are going to pay for their mortgage, rent, health care, utilities, student loans, and credit card bills. This is not a hypothetical fear any more. This is reality. Every day I hear from members who are terrified about how they will be able to survive this—how they are going to pay for their kid's college tuition or for their ailing parent's medical care. Employees are telling me that their creditors and landlords are unwilling to work with them and are expecting full and prompt payment of what is owed despite the lack of a paycheck due to the shutdown. Those who are required to work without pay have limited to no ability to earn additional income with part-time work and are unable to get unemployment benefits. Furthermore, some who are working unpaid are required to make prompt payments on official government purchases made on their government-issued credit cards while the federal government is shut down and unable to reimburse them. This shutdown is hard on all employees, but especially so for those with the least means, who cannot float government purchases or live on savings while they go without their paychecks.

This is an unconscionable way to treat the dedicated employees who serve the American people. For years, Congress has been working to try and improve recruitment and retention at federal agencies, especially 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 get back to work and do their job. But whether they are required to work or furloughed, they need to get paid. It is imperative that the government reopen and pay employees as soon as possible.

As hundreds of thousands of federal employees wake up to the reality of missing their paycheck, I urge you act quickly to reopen the federal government, provide prompt back pay to impacted employees, and ensure that the dedicated federal employees who work on behalf of our nation receive a pay increase for 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President