



January 24, 2019

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United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I write regarding the proposals to reopen the federal government scheduled for votes this week on the Senate floor. We urge you to support the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2019 (H.R. 268), legislation already passed by the House of Representatives that will reopen the federal government, put public service workers back on the job, and restore the critical government services relied on by the American people. We also urge you to reject the End the Shutdown and Secure the Border Act, legislation proposed by President Trump that holds the reopening of the government hostage to the enactment of divisive proposals on immigration and border security.

With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations—from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers—AFSCME knows firsthand the critical role that government programs play in strengthening our communities and meeting the diverse needs of our fellow citizens. The shutdown is denying the American people critical public services and unnecessarily hurting 800,000 dedicated federal employees, their families and communities. It is also jeopardizing state employees working in federally funded positions, who may be furloughed if their employers are unwilling or unable to cover the loss of federal funds.

The harm being done by the shutdown continues to grow. Routine food safety inspections are not being performed, increasing the risks that contaminated foods will make it on to grocery store shelves. Airplane safety inspectors are off the job, endangering travelers. States are delaying transportation projects, putting local jobs at risk. Economists are warning that the shutdown could lead to a recession, and even the White House has acknowledged that the shutdown is harming the economy. If the shutdown continues, programs relied on by tens of millions of Americans, including SNAP benefits, the National School Lunch Program, and rental assistance programs could be affected, creating a national humanitarian and financial crisis.

The Senate must seize this opportunity to immediately reopen the government before more harm is done. Complex and divisive proposals on immigration and border security should be set aside for a more thoughtful negotiation than the current climate allows.

Sincerely,

Scott Frey
Director of Federal Government Affairs

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American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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