

September 7, 2023

Dear Representatives and Senators:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I write to express concern with the potential for a government shutdown, and I ask that you support an agreement to fund the federal government and avoid the disastrous effects that even a temporary lapse in appropriations could have on our nation.

Failure to fund the federal government is a dereliction of duty by Congress, one that not only jeopardizes the livelihoods of our nation's federal employees, but also thwarts their ability to serve this country and its citizens. Shutdowns waste time and resources that should otherwise be focused on agency missions. With weeks left before the end of the fiscal year, Congress has yet to come to an agreement to fund the government, forcing agencies to prepare for the likelihood of lapsed appropriations and placing an unnecessary burden on federal employees through fear of furloughs and missed paychecks.

The deal ending the earlier debt limit crisis created a spending roadmap to avoid this very situation set to unfold in the coming weeks. The Senate is moving forward on a bipartisan basis, utilizing that roadmap set forth in the budget agreement. I urge the House to negotiate in good faith with the Senate, within the parameters of the existing agreement. Doing otherwise seeks to leverage the potential of a government shutdown to gain concessions that lack bipartisan support. History has proven such efforts futile, resulting only in wasteful government shutdowns and political grandstanding, without any meaningful change in the ultimate policy outcome.

Federal workers protect our borders, ensure safe travel, and help us prepare for and recover from disaster. They inspect our food supplies, keep criminals in prison and care for our veterans, along with so much more. These upstanding citizens go to work for the American people every single day, but Congress and a looming shutdown place them needlessly at risk.

The individual-level effects should not go unstated. Federal employees are just like everyone else in this country. They experience the same financial stressors that so many are facing today. It's a tragedy that so many people live paycheck to paycheck, and federal employees are not exempt from this. A single missed paycheck, even when paid back later, can have devastating financial effects on federal employees.

NARFE understands the realities of the current appropriations process. The progress made in both chambers is well behind where things should be. We encourage the House and the Senate to come to an agreement and continue their work to pass full-year appropriations. However, contingencies should be put in place, such as a short-term

continuing resolution, to ensure that federal operations continue when the current fiscal year ends.

It should be clear to all that there are no winners from shutting down the government. The economic turmoil, the halting of government services and the erosion of the public's trust benefits no one. Congress has the basic responsibility to fund the government and must do so.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions or concerns about this request, please contact NARFE Staff Vice President for Policy and Programs John Hatton at jhatton@narfe.org or 571-483-1267.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William Shackelford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" being more prominent and the last name "Shackelford" following in a similar style.

William Shackelford
NARFE National President