

January 27, 2026

Sent via e-mail

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), which represents the interests of federal employees, retirees and their survivors, I write to urge you to (i) pass each of the remaining appropriations bills that have been negotiated and agreed-to on a bipartisan basis, separating the controversy over Homeland Security funding from other critical government operations, and (ii) engage in good faith bipartisan negotiations over the Homeland Security appropriations bills to prevent a partial government shutdown.

First, there is no compelling rationale to withhold funding for five of the six remaining bills, covering our nation's defense, administration of health care programs, and more, over controversy regarding Homeland Security funding. There is bipartisan, bicameral agreement on those 5 bills (Defense, Labor-HHS-Education, State-Foreign Ops, THUD, FSGG) that do not rely on agreement on the Homeland Security bill. Failing to separate out the controversial bill only results in needless government dysfunction, and waste of taxpayer dollars.

Second, we urge good faith negotiations over Homeland Security funding. It is a normal part of the appropriations process to negotiate what activities Congress provides funding for, under what conditions, and to ensure activities funded by Congress are carried out in a lawful and constitutional manner. NARFE does not have a member-endorsed advocacy position on the details of such funding. But Homeland Security funding is much broader than the more controversial (in the current moment, at least) activities of Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It includes, for example, funding for the Coast Guard. We urge senators to find common ground to fund the critical activities of government covered by Homeland Security funding.

Finally, I would like to share the statement we issued in response to the killing of Alex Pretti, a federal employee:

NARFE mourns the tragic death of Alex Pretti, a federal employee who served as an ICU nurse at a Veterans Affairs hospital.

Federal employees like Pretti retain their constitutional rights as private citizens to observe and protest their government when off duty, within the confines of the law. At the same time, all federal employees — including Border Patrol agents and other federal law enforcement personnel — are required to act within the law and the U.S. Constitution in the performance of their official duties.

NARFE calls for an independent and unbiased investigation into the circumstances of Pretti's death to ensure that constitutional rights are upheld and that federal employees remain accountable to the oath of office they take.

Video footage circulating publicly has raised serious questions. NARFE encourages its members and the public to review the available information and reach their own conclusions as the facts are examined.

In negotiating a funding agreement, we urge you to keep these principles and thoughts in mind.

We are on the heels of a record-long, 43-day government shutdown. We do not need another one. We at least urge you to limit the extent of any shutdown in scope and length.

For these reasons, I urge you to (i) pass each of the remaining appropriations bills that have been negotiated and agreed-to on a bipartisan basis, separating the controversy over Homeland Security funding from other critical government operations, and (ii) engage in good faith bipartisan negotiations over the Homeland Security appropriations bills to prevent a partial government shutdown.

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 cursive script that reads "William Shackelford".

William Shackelford
NARFE National President