

March 23, 2026

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we respectfully urge you to cosponsor and support the *Shutdown Fairness Act* (S. 3168 / H.R. 7137), introduced by Senator Ron Johnson in the Senate and Representatives Dusty Johnson (SD-AL) and Josh Gottheimer (NJ-5) in the House. This bipartisan legislation would ensure that federal employees, service members, active-duty reservists, and covered contractors are paid in full and on time during any lapse in appropriations.

The federal government is currently experiencing its third shutdown this fiscal year. During the current lapse, transportation security officers, Coast Guard personnel, and other Department of Homeland Security employees continue reporting to work to protect the public, even as their paychecks are withheld.

Funding lapses place significant strain on the federal workforce and the families who depend on steady and predictable income. While most federal operations continue because employees are deemed essential for the protection of life and property, many are required to work without pay. This situation creates unnecessary financial uncertainty and risks undermining morale, recruitment, and retention across critical agencies.

Historically, agencies did not cease paying employees during temporary lapses in appropriations. Following legal opinions issued in 1980 and 1981, agencies were required to shut down and furlough non-excepted employees. Over time, the number of employees designated to continue working during lapses has grown substantially. As a result, today most of the federal workforce continues serving the public during shutdowns, but without guaranteed on-time pay.

Importantly, the *Shutdown Fairness Act* does not authorize new or additional spending. Current law already provides back pay to affected federal employees once funding is restored. This legislation simply ensures continuity of pay during a lapse, rather than requiring families to wait weeks or months for compensation they have already earned.

The bill also contains safeguards to ensure appropriated funds are used solely to pay the salaries and wages of employees onboard prior to a funding lapse. Funds may not be diverted, reprogrammed, or repurposed for other activities.

Federal employees, service members, and contractors serve communities in every state and district. They carry out missions vital to aviation and maritime safety, disaster response, veterans' care, public health, and countless other responsibilities. Ensuring timely pay during funding lapses is a practical and responsible step that supports both the workforce and the continuity of essential government services.

We respectfully urge you to cosponsor H.R. 7137 / S. 3168, the *Shutdown Fairness Act*, and support a commonsense solution that provides certainty and stability for those who serve the American people.

Sincerely,

Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA)
Allied Pilots Association (APA)
Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE)
Association of Civilian Technicians (ACT)
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA)
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS)
Brotherhood of Maintenance Way Employees Division-IBT (BMWED-IBT)
Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations (CAPA)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA)
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers, AFL-CIO (IW)
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (IBB)
International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)
International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)
International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P)
International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC)
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA)
National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV)
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots (NJASAP)
Partnership for Public Service
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO (PASS)
Seafarers International Union (AFL-CIO)
Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (SWAPA)
Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO (TWU)
United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)
United Steelworkers (USW)
Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA)