

February 4, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Ron Johnson
The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Elijah Cummings
The Honorable Jim Jordan
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned organizations write in support of efforts to secure back pay for employees of federal contractors who were unpaid during the recent government shutdown. Just as Congress rightly provided back pay for federal employees who were furloughed or unpaid during the shutdown, Congress should also provide back pay for the contract employees who face extreme financial hardship as a result of going over a month without their paychecks.

Over the past few decades, the federal government has contracted out more and more of the jobs and functions federal employees once performed. For every federal worker hired, there are almost two more contract workers hired, for a total of about 3.7 million according to 2015 estimates from the Volcker Alliance. These jobs include the women and men who clean federal buildings, staff cafeterias and concession stands, process payments, and provide vital tech support to federal agencies.

These federal contract workers help keep our nation running, even if their paychecks aren't cut directly by the U.S. government, and they need their paychecks just as badly as federal employees and deserve the same considerations when the government shuts down.

As Congress negotiates a deal to secure funding for the rest of the fiscal year, we urge you to do everything within your power to provide back pay for the contract workers throughout this country who have suffered just as grave a financial injury as federal employees did during this shutdown. Equity demands that they too be made whole for the injuries they suffered.

Sincerely,

9to5
A Better Balance
AFL-CIO
Amara Legal Center
American Association of People with Disabilities
Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Center for American Progress
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Progressive Reform
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.
Child Care Law Center
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Community Labor United
CREDO Action
DC Bar Pro Bono Center
Demos
Economic Policy Institute
Endangered Species Coalition
Equal Rights Advocates
Family Values @ Work
Futures Without Violence
Good Jobs First
Hill Snowden Foundation
Indigenous Environmental Network
Interfaith Worker Justice
Interfaith Worker Justice San Diego
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW
Jobs With Justice
Keystone Research Center
KWH Law Center for Social Justice and Change
Labor Project for Working Families
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy
Main Street Alliance
Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights
MomsRising
MoveOn
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Center for Lesbian Rights
The National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Nurses United
National Partnership for Women & Families

National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
Northwest Forest Worker Center
Oxfam America
PolicyLink
Policy Matters Ohio
SafeWork Washington
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Service Employees International Union
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
United Steelworkers
Voices for Progress
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs