

**IMPACT OF FEDERAL SHUTDOWN ON FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**  
**January 14, 2019**

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Mr. President. Today is day 24 of the Trump shutdown, and days after federal government employees furloughed or working without pay did not get their pay checks.

Federal contractors have already received “stop work” orders. Not only are they not getting paid, but they will never receive “back pay” for work lost.

This Trump shutdown is now the longest shutdown in U.S. history. History will show this shutdown to be a political and financial fiasco of the president’s making.

As you can see from this map published by the *New York Times* -- my home state of New Mexico is one of the states most impacted.

We have a large workforce in some of the federal agencies that are currently shutdown – including the Departments of Interior, Homeland Security, and Agriculture.

My staff estimates, conservatively, we have at least 10,800 federal employees affected, not counting law enforcement. We are a small state. This has a big impact. And there are no good estimates of the impact on the many New Mexicans employed by or under contract with federal contractors.

Federal employees are true public servants – who often forego jobs that pay more because they believe in public service. These men and women have families. Some don’t have much savings. Some live pay check to pay check.

Like the Border Patrol Agent, from Las Cruces, in southern New Mexico, who’s worked for Customs and Border Protection for 18 years. He tells me: “I live paycheck to paycheck. If I don't

get paid the money that I earn, I AM NOT GOING TO MAKE IT! Creditors are not forgiving any debts. I am asking you to please try and help me and all federal workers get paid. I feel stressed and helpless, please help.”

This is from a Border Patrol Agent -- the folks that we rely on to actually keep our nation safe, which the president claims is his aim. This agent is hurting. The president is devastating these agents and their families.

While Border Patrol Agents may or may not support a wall – they do NOT support going unpaid for the difficult and dangerous work they do in service to our nation. In service to keeping our borders safe, the president’s claimed goal.

The president’s unconvincing claim that he can “relate” to federal workers not getting paid was belied by his completely out-of-touch statement that they can “make adjustments” and be just fine.

This president cannot “relate” to the professional support employee in the Las Cruces FBI office whose mortgage company, gas company, and credit card companies are giving her no leeway – making no “adjustments” – while she goes without pay. She says she is “a REAL human who is being held hostage...” She’s worked for the FBI for 21 years. But she will probably leave federal service early so that she have the financial security she needs to pay her bills.

She and the 800,000 other federal workers ARE being held hostage -- by a president who is willing to wreck American families for his vanity wall.

An occupational therapist with the Indian Health Services at the Gallup Indian Medical Center in northwestern New Mexico tells me, emphatically and in all capital letters: “I AM NOT WITH THE PRESIDENT ON THIS ISSUE.” She is working hard -- providing needed services to Native communities -- but, providing for herself, and with no pay, she is beyond stretched. She was

helping her son pay off college loans. She's had to tell him, she can't help right now. She has an elderly mother she visits in Las Cruces. She can't plan a trip now.

In fact, IHS health care providers all over the country provide services essential to the health and wellness of nearly 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in over 800 hospitals and clinics in 37 states. These federal employees and medical professionals – including over 2,000 nurses and nearly as many doctors, pharmacists, dentists, and physician assistants -- aren't getting paid. But they are forced to work without pay. And there is no end in sight.

Federal contractors really feel the brunt of the shutdown. Their contract payments are stopped. Contractors have NEVER received back payments after a government shutdown.

We have a federal contractor in Albuquerque -- ADC Limited New Mexico -- a minority, woman owned company that has 2,600 employees and contractors nationwide, with 330 employees in Albuquerque. The company conducts background investigations for, ironically enough, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies. This company's work has come to a complete stop. And this slows down DHS's ability to hire qualified employees, inhibiting its mission to keep our borders and nation safe.

This company is losing tens of thousands of dollars a day. This really hurts my state. And its loss in revenues translates directly into a loss in state and tax revenue.

The multiplier effect of the shutdown on New Mexico and the nation will ripple throughout the economy.

This privately-held company, owned by New Mexicans whose lineage in our state goes back more than 300 years, is currently paying its employees even though its revenue has stopped.

The owners are sacrificing to do so. But they can't continue for the "months or even years" the president says his shutdown could last.

Federal employees will not stay in their jobs without pay for months or years. They have to feed their families, pay their mortgage or rent.

Last week, the Senate passed S. 24 – sponsored by 43 Democrats and 1 Republican – by voice vote. The bill guarantees that furloughed federal workers would be paid retroactively as soon as possible. This is the LEAST Congress can do for these workers. It does not resolve, however, the pain federal workers endure through a shutdown or guarantee that their homes won't be at risk during a shutdown or guarantee that food will be on their table. Or ensure that federal workers will stay in their jobs during a prolonged shutdown – like the one this president apparently foresees. The solution is to shut down the shutdown. Now.

And this Trump shutdown doesn't only affect federal employees and contractors. It affects the tens of thousands of Americans who rely on government services or need approval for projects.

A local Santa Fe small business -- a construction company, Sarcon Construction Corporation -- is ready to begin an \$8.4 million dollar project to build two new hangars at the Santa Fe Municipal Airport. This 32,000 square-foot project will generate \$650,000 dollars in local tax revenue, and it will employ 75 to 100 people. Many of those people are literally unemployed now. Waiting for this project to begin. This project is a big deal for my home city of Santa Fe.

But do you know why the project is stalled? Sarcon can't get the necessary approval from the Federal Aviation Administration -- because of the Trump shutdown. The FAA personnel responsible for approval are furloughed.

This shutdown has real consequences for real people -- especially for people like those unemployed construction workers in New Mexico ready and eager to work -- but unable because of our president's inability to do his job.

The president's ridiculous claim -- that "many" federal employees that are not getting paid support his shutdown -- has no basis in reality.

The federal workers in New Mexico who are furloughed or working without pay in New Mexico who are contacting me most emphatically do not support this shutdown.

An employee with the Department of Interior in Albuquerque writes: "While I am not sure how much good it would do, I emailed the White House to go on record that I am not one of the Federal employees the president is touting as wanting to be out of work without a paycheck until he gets his wall. I just want to go on record . . . that no, Federal employees do not want to stay out of work; we want to go back to work and get paid. This is not our fight, just his."

A husband and wife from Las Cruces who both work for the Environmental Protection Agency are also among the many federal workers who do not support the Trump shutdown. They have 3 children -- and they need their pay checks. And they don't support Trump's wall either. As EPA engineers they understand -- and oppose -- the environmental destruction it will cause.

A scientist for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico is one of the hundreds of thousands of federal workers who are "essential," and working without pay. He's working on critical space infrastructure and testing relating to the Space X launch scheduled for later this month.

There is no good reason this important work is not being paid for -- right now.

There is no good reason why any federal employee is not getting their salary today. No good reason federal contractors' contracts are not being honored.

This federal shutdown hurts American families across my state and the nation. It hurts our economy.

These are just a few stories. There are many more coming into my office. And many that are not.

One federal employee in New Mexico wanted to tell their story – but was banned by their employer – on the ground that it would represent illegal lobbying of Congress. This is patently false. Federal employees contacting their federal elected representatives, about this shutdown and its impact on their work and lives, is not prohibited lobbying. The Trump administration has not only put these people out of work, it is now gagging them and denying them their free speech rights.

Last year, Congress was ready to fund all of the federal government. Our chamber unanimously passed a spending bill December 19 that would have kept the government open – with the assurance the president would sign off.

The president walked away – fearing the criticism from the far-right news media. He's now jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of everyday Americans – refusing to engage in any meaningful negotiations — to keep his narrow base content. The House and Senate Democrats offer reasonable compromise: Let's fund the rest of government and then we can debate other issues.

It is absolutely the case that Democrats believe in strong border security. We disagree with the president how to get there. Democrats support smart technology and other modern, effective measures. The president supports an ineffective, wasteful, and medieval wall.

We do have serious disagreements when it comes to which policies best match our values and needs as a nation. And we can debate how best to deal with border security. But – in the meantime – hurting real people with real mortgages to pay, with real children to feed, and real bills to pay – is cruel and senseless.

I call upon the president to end this terrible shutdown. Today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.