



American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Nurses and Health  
Professionals

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January 3, 2019

U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I urge you to support legislation to end the government shutdown, fund vital programs and services, and put more than 800,000 federal workers back to work. Nobody wins in a shutdown, and this one is no exception. The president's capricious and politically motivated shutdown imperils some of our most vulnerable citizens, including Native Americans, whose health and safety is increasingly compromised as the government fails to provide needed law enforcement and healthcare services on tribal lands. To make matters worse, they will now be forced to endure winter conditions without vital services such as road maintenance and snow plowing, which will cut off their access to schools, medicine and food.

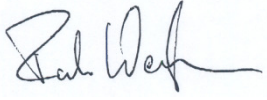
The new Democratic leadership has taken the initiative to offer legislation that is a reasonable and much-needed solution to fund our government. This legislative package will provide funding for the complete fiscal year for six of the outstanding seven appropriations bills, using funding levels that already have bipartisan approval in the Senate. The package will also continue existing funding levels for the Department of Homeland Security through Feb. 8. By doing so, the bills separate Americans' need for a fully functioning, fully operational government from the president's call for his "wall." It also frees this new Congress to address the issues of border security and immigration separately, without holding the rest of the federal government hostage to the president's whims.

Should the bills not be passed and signed into law, national parks will remain closed, small-business owners and some homeowners will not have access to loans, food safety inspections will be delayed, and crime victims will not receive necessary services. In addition, hundreds of thousands of public employees will continue to be furloughed or work without pay, making it difficult for them to pay their prescription drugs costs, rent, utilities or other expenses. These include AFT members and others whose jobs are funded through federal agencies.

We urge Congress to follow the lead of the House Democratic leadership and support legislation to reopen the government, ensuring families and communities can get the services they rely on and workers get the paychecks they've earned. If President Trump is the deal-maker he claims to be, this legislation provides ample opportunity to negotiate a workable solution.

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Randi Weingarten  
President

RW:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio