



December 20, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
418 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, and the millions of workers that we represent, we implore Congress to act immediately to avert a damaging government shutdown and provide much-needed relief to our transportation infrastructure by passing a bipartisan Continuing Resolution.

Transportation workers remember all too well the last time a funding debate collapsed in late December. The 2018-2019 partial government shutdown—the longest in U.S. history—was a self-inflicted debacle that wreaked havoc on our transportation system, forced federal workers and contractors to either stay at home or work without pay, and cost the U.S. economy \$11 billion of which \$3 billion we will never get back. This was not just an administrative inconvenience—it was a reckless, entirely preventable crisis that undermined public safety, economic stability, and the livelihoods of thousands of transportation professionals.

In total, 800,000 federal workers went five weeks without pay, including aviation safety inspectors who were initially furloughed. Without these critical safety professionals, essential oversight of commercial aircraft, pilots, and repair stations ceased. Over 10,400 fully certified air traffic controllers worked mandatory 6-day workweeks and 10-hour days without pay, alongside more than 4,000 FAA technicians and 45,000 Transportation Security Officers. This preventable crisis led to widespread unscheduled leave and resignations, resulting in understaffed TSA checkpoints and halting the FAA's efforts to address the air traffic controller staffing crisis.

Congress must not allow a repeat of this disastrous experience. The ripple effects of government shutdowns—avoidable political failures—are immense and unnecessary. They pose substantial risk not just to our National Airspace System, but to transportation safety more broadly.



Nearly 5,000 federal civilian firefighters and government-contracted firefighters and first responders would be required to work their normal shifts without pay. Civilian-trained mariners, who maintain and operate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration vessels, and mariners on dredging and survey vessels under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be furloughed or required to sail without pay. Coast Guard operations would also be affected, including those related to mariner credentialing and vessel documentation.

Let's be clear: this is not just poor governance—it is a dereliction of duty. Congressional leaders of both parties have already reached agreement on a continuing resolution that would both keep the government running through Spring and provide critical disaster relief, including \$8 billion for highway infrastructure repairs and \$300 million for Coast Guard emergency responses. Walking away from that agreement right now and racing toward a funding deadline with no serious alternative is grossly irresponsible when millions of travelers rely on these federal workers for their safety. The stakes are far too high for this kind of political brinkmanship.

Risking transportation safety and forcing frontline workers to shoulder this dysfunction during the holidays is unacceptable. A bipartisan deal exists - pass it now and deliver the disaster relief our communities need.

Greg Regan
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', enclosed within a hand-drawn circle.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO