

Bill protecting Federal, other government workers from shutdown passes Senate

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 01/10/2019

WASHINGTON – Twenty days into the federal government shutdown, the Senate has passed by unanimous consent a bill sponsored by U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), and three dozen senators to ensure federal and other government workers who have been impacted by the current federal government shutdown will receive their back pay. The Government Employee Fair Treatment Act stipulates that all employees shall be paid as soon as possible after the lapse in appropriations ends – this includes those forced to work without pay and those locked out of their jobs during the shutdown. The bill also clarifies that excepted employees who have scheduled previously approved leave occurring during an appropriations lapse may indeed take that leave without undue penalty. It also clarifies that its provisions also apply to employees of the District of Columbia (DC) Government, D.C. Courts, and D.C. Public Defenders Service, who are also affected by federal government shutdowns.

“Federal workers are dedicated public servants who shouldn’t continue to suffer – working dangerous jobs without knowing when their next paycheck may come, or being forcibly furloughed and unable to carry out their mission – because of the government shutdown. Passage of our bill may not answer the question of when a paycheck will come, but it will guarantee that a paycheck will come when this shutdown finally ends,” said Senator Cardin. “We need to reopen the government immediately. Until we do, passage of our bill should be a sign of good faith and respect for federal workers, as well as a sign to creditors that our public servants will be made financially whole again. The House of Representatives should pass this legislation quickly and send it to the president, who has said he would sign it into law.”

“The partial government shutdown represents a failure to govern and harms not only those who need to interact with the closed agencies, but also hundreds of thousands of federal employees and their families who don’t know when they will receive their next paycheck,” said Senator Collins. “Civil servants bring dedication, competence, and experience to their work, and I appreciate all that they do for our government and our nation. Our legislation would guarantee that they are paid retroactively as soon as appropriations are restored. I am also continuing to discuss with the White House and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle ways to bring an end to the shutdown as quickly as possible so that furloughed federal employees can return to work.”

“For three weeks, I’ve heard from the federal workers that I represent who are worried about how they will make ends meet if this shutdown continues. These hardworking men and women have nothing to do with the political gamesmanship that led to the Trump Shutdown, but they’ve had to pay the price,” said Senator Chris Van Hollen. “Today, the Senate has passed our legislation on a bipartisan basis to provide our federal workforce with the much-needed certainty that they will receive their paycheck when the shutdown ends. But they shouldn’t be without a paycheck at all – they should be at work. Now, we must work together to end this crisis and reopen the government without delay.”

“On the eve of the first missed payday, the Senate has acted to make sure that federal employees get paid just as soon as the government reopens for business,” said Senator Warner. “I expect that the Democratic House will take up and pass this legislation in short order. Our federal workforce – Americans who dedicate their lives to serving this country – shouldn’t have to bear the brunt of this unnecessary shutdown. The President must allow the government to re-open for business immediately.”

“Yesterday I alerted both caucuses that I would object to Senators leaving for the weekend while 800,000 federal employees were on the cusp of losing out on pay Friday,” Senator Kaine said. “I am thankful that as a result we were able to engage in a discussion that will give those employees some measure of comfort that they will receive their paychecks when the shutdown is over. This is not the same thing as knowing when the shutdown will be over, or receiving their paychecks on time, but it is the right thing to do for us to show these hard working Americans we’re there for them.”

Additional cosponsors of the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act are: Senators Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Doug Jones (D-Ala.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Joe Manchin (D-W.V.), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Robert Casey (D-Pa.), Angus King (I-Maine), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

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