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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:

DEFENSE

HOMELAND SECURITY

October 17, 2025

Mr. Patrick Morrissey
98-719 Iho Pl # 5-1003
Aiea, HI 96701-2515

Dear Mr. Morrissey:

Mahalo for previously contacting me in support of our invaluable federal employees. I want to update you on the completely avoidable and solvable federal government shutdown, now in its third week, and my efforts to assist our Hawaii's 24,000-plus civilian federal employees, thousands of federal contractors and their employees, and 48,000-plus active duty military federal employees, together with all of your families, who are bearing the brunt of this shutdown. I also ask for your further input, and that you share my report with anyone who may be interested in it.

My Office is Here to Help. First, while I continue every effort to end this shutdown fairly and fully as soon as possible, please know that my staff and I remain on the job, and my DC and Honolulu offices remain open throughout the shutdown to perform our legislative duties and help Hawai'i and my constituents. If you or others you know have any questions or are facing any specific issues, please reach out to my office at (808) 650-6688 or contact me at ed.case@mail.house.gov. We will do all we can to help you and others navigate this very unfortunate crisis.

Why the Shutdown is Happening. The current shutdown was avoidable, and passing the necessary legislation to fund our government remains very doable in a matter of days.

The President and his Congressional colleagues are in control of Congress, and they are shutting down the government to avoid critical action needed to prevent huge health care cost increases as well as loss of health care coverage for tens of millions of Americans, including tens of thousands of our own in Hawai'i.

The solution is clearly a bipartisan compromise agreement for the good of the country that continues both overall government funding and literally life-and-death health care assistance to tens of millions of Americans. There are lots of ways to do this, and I've spent the recent days with like-minded colleagues walking through and advocating for various options under which we could surmount the deep partisanship and crippling my-way-or-the-highway division and achieve a bipartisan compromise vote. Until that happens, and with mutual commitment, it can happen in just days, we must deal with the current shutdown as best we can.

To learn more about my thoughts about the current shutdown, please read my latest e-newsletter at <https://case.house.gov/news/email/> and watch my recent tele-talk story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S9F2i3Zc58>.

Effects of a Shutdown on Federal Workers. The most immediate effects of a federal government shutdown are of course the furlough of many employees, the continued work of most, and the suspension of pay for all funded by regular appropriations whether working or furloughed.

Because of the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act (<https://tinyurl.com/9yd6eejx>), which I helped pass into law in 2019, furloughed and essential federal employees are guaranteed to receive backpay once the shutdown ends. The administration has threatened to withhold this backpay once the shutdown ends. That is illegal and there are outstanding lawsuits to prevent any such action by the administration.

The administration recently directed our Department of Defense to pay our active servicemembers their last paycheck out of funds appropriated for other purposes. I do not believe federal employees should go unpaid during a shutdown and so generally support such payments if otherwise authorized and legal. However, this payment was not authorized and is not anything more than a short-term fix. The administration has not announced any plans to similarly attempt to pay non-defense federal workers. The only real way to get all workers paid is for the shutdown to end and for Congress to be called back to actually vote to restart paychecks and pay back pay.

The administration is also actively inflaming the situation by attempting RIFs (firings) of federal employees. These RIFs are intended to intimidate and punish any opposition. They are also outright cruel to federal workers.

The RIFs are illegal as they do not follow standard federal RIF laws and procedures, especially during a shutdown, and lawsuits have already been filed to stop them. A federal court issued a temporary restraining order directing the administration to immediately cease and reverse its attempted RIFs of federal employees. This is not a permanent ruling but should nonetheless stop the attempted RIFs while the public unions' case against the administration continues.

Unemployment Assistance for Furloughed Federal Workers. I recently met with our State Unemployment Commissioner to get more information about how unemployment benefits work for federal employees during this shutdown.

First, under current law only furloughed federal workers are eligible for unemployment assistance. Furloughed workers can file an initial claim for benefits online or in person at a local claims office. They must provide the following information:

- Social Security number

- Employment information, such as agency's name and address
- Dates of employment
- Bank information for direct deposit
- W-2
- Recent pay stubs or "Leave and Earnings Statement" for the last eighteen months
- SF-8, Notice to Federal Employee About Unemployment Insurance
- SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action

This information should be submitted as soon as possible to help furloughed workers receive benefits as soon as possible, but they can submit some documentation at a later date if they do not have it at the time of the initial filing.

Individuals can file online at <https://huiclaims.hawaii.gov> by clicking on "Claimant Services Login/Create Account." This online service is available Monday to Friday from 6:30am to 11:00pm, and on weekends and holidays, from 9:00am to 11:00pm.

Federal employees will be filing through the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program, which is separate from the standard state unemployment program. Since furloughed employees are still attached to the federal government, they are waived from the typical unemployment work search requirements.

Following the initial filing, the State Unemployment Office has 12 days to reach out to the federal agency that employs the claimant. Since the federal agency staff that would normally respond to these requests might also be furloughed, it will likely delay response times according to the State Unemployment Office. If the state does not receive a reply from the federal agency within 12 days, it is the state's responsibility to request an affidavit from the claimant regarding wage data (i.e. W2 from previous year and 18 months of paystubs).

It is important to note that once federal employees are called back to work, the unemployment office will send out questionnaires asking federal employees if they received backpay and if they received accurate payments from the UCFE. If employees receive backpay, as is fully expected under federal law, they must repay the unemployment payments.

For more information about the UCFE, you can review this flyer from the State Unemployment Office: <https://labor.hawaii.gov/ui/files/2025/02/UCFE-2025-Flyer.pdf>.

To help our non-furloughed federal employees who are deemed essential and working without pay, I recently cosponsored H.R. 5572, the Help Federal Employees During Shutdowns Act. H.R. 5572 would allow non-furloughed federal employees to apply for and receive unemployment compensation for any week they are performing work during a government shutdown. They would be subject to the same requirement as furloughed employees and have to pay back unemployment benefits once the shutdown ends and they are given their backpay. Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that this proposal will be enacted in time to help our federal employees during the current shutdown, but hopefully we can correct this for any federal employees in any future shutdown.

Again, if you or federal employees you know have any questions or are facing specific challenges, please reach out to my office at (808) 650-6688 or contact me at ed.case@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again, and please continue to let me know of your views. Please also sign up for regular updates from me and my office through my e-newsletter and social media outreach at <https://case.house.gov/contact>.

With aloha,

Ed Case

Congressman Ed Case
(Hawai'i-First District)

