



September 29, 2025

Dear Senate Minority Leader Schumer and House Minority Leader Jeffries,

We, the undersigned federal worker unions and organizations, implore you to reject any bad budget deal in the name of protecting federal employees. We are directly impacted when the government shuts down: our members would no longer be able to work, get paid, or fulfill their mission of serving the American public. But we believe the most important thing is fighting against the centralization of executive power and for the long-term survival of the critical services the federal government provides, even if that means allowing the government to temporarily shut down. **Next year's budget must ensure adequate funding for critical public services; guarantee that appropriated funds are spent to provide those services; and oppose the Trump Administration's efforts to further weaken the programs, protections, and services that tens of millions of Americans rely upon.**

The Continuing Resolution we are currently operating under has given President Trump extraordinary powers over government spending, which he has used to slash public services. As a result, the American people are already experiencing unprecedented harms, which we detail below.

**Cuts to Social Security.** Hardworking Americans spend their lives contributing to Social Security understanding that it will be there when they retire. But due to Trump Administration cuts, Americans are struggling to receive their benefits. [Social Security has lost 20% of its staff](#) in 2025.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, before the DOGE cuts took effect, [Social Security was already at its lowest staffing level in 25 years](#)<sup>2</sup> despite [steadily increasing numbers of Social Security recipients](#).<sup>3</sup> [As Senator Warren recently revealed](#), President Trump's Social Security Administration is turning to poorly-designed AI solutions to make up for its self-created staffing shortfalls. More than 50% of Social Security calls are now answered by AI tools that regularly hang up on callers and provide inaccurate information.<sup>4</sup>

**Cuts to the Department of Veterans Affairs.** Our Veterans were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country. But the Trump Administration's cuts at the VA have made

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Peck, *Social Security Offices Lost an Estimated 20% of Staff this Year*, Axios (Aug. 7, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> AFGE *Urges Congress to Fund SSA to Meet Public Demand*, AFGE (Feb. 26, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> *Monthly Statistical Snapshot, August 2025*, Social Security Admin. (Sep. 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Press Release, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, *New War Room Investigation Reveals Trump Admin Dishonesty About Social Security Call Wait Times* (June 26, 2025).

it even harder for Veterans to receive needed healthcare. [As of last month, there were more than 160,000 Veterans in the VA backlog.](#)<sup>5</sup> The Department of Veterans Affairs needs more funding and staffing if it is to provide timely care. And yet [the Guardian recently reported that:](#) “the number of medical staff on hand to treat veterans has fallen every month since Donald Trump took office. The VA has experienced a net loss of 2,000 registered nurses since the start of this fiscal year, the data show, along with approximately 1,300 medical assistants, 1,100 nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses, 800 doctors, 500 social workers and 150 psychologists.”<sup>6</sup> Even worse, [the Trump VA is now boasting about its plan](#) to further reduce VA staffing and cut 30,000 VA staffers by the end of fiscal year 2025.<sup>7</sup>

**Attacks on independent science and data.** The Republican House Appropriations Committee Health and Human Services bill appropriation, if passed, would [cut the CDC by \\$7 billion.](#)<sup>8</sup> NASA employees are being required to make plans to [shut down currently-operating missions](#) that scientists, farmers, and others around the world rely on.<sup>9</sup> And President Trump recently fired Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Erika McEntarfer because of his false belief that recent jobs data were [“rigged in order to make the Republicans, and ME, look bad.”](#)<sup>10</sup> Government-funded scientific programs landed us on the moon, invented the internet, and have paved the way for decades of American prosperity. Scientific integrity and independence is crucial if America is to remain the world’s leader on science.

**Agency closures without congressional input.** Federal agencies are the bodies that provide the government’s critical programs. A harm to an agency is a harm to those receiving its services. And yet the Trump Administration has unilaterally and unconstitutionally shuttered critical operations at the US Agency for International Development, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, United States Agency for Global Media, Minority Business Development Agency, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, Department of Education, and is attempting to do something similar at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. As James Madison wrote in *Federalist No. 51*, the “great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others.”<sup>11</sup> The shuttering of

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<sup>5</sup> Lori Polemenakos, *Veterans Disability Benefits Statistics Report: New for August 2025*, Disability Approval Guide (Aug. 26, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> Aaron Glantz, *US Veterans Agency Lost Thousands of ‘Core’ Medical Staff Under Trump, Records Show*, Guardian (Aug. 11, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Press Release, U.S. Dep’t Vet. Affs., VA to reduce staff by nearly 30K by end of FY2025 (Jul. 7, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Nat’l Assoc. County & City Health Officials, *House Appropriations Committee Releases FY26 Labor-HHS Bill* (Sep. 12, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> Kimberly M. S. Cartier, *NASA Planning for Unauthorized Shutdown of Carbon Monitoring Satellites*, EOS (Aug. 5, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Econ. Pol’y Inst., *Firing BLS Commissioner Erika McEntarfer* (Aug. 5, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> The Federalist No. 51 (James Madison).

congressionally-created agencies, or the transferring of their responsibilities to other agencies, requires congressional approval and must only occur following the passage of congressional legislation.

**Undercutting American labor.** At a time in which [68% of Americans support labor unions](#),<sup>12</sup> the Trump Administration is waging a war on federal labor unions. Breaking with decades of tradition, President Trump has unilaterally, and without congressional input, ended collective-bargaining across much of the federal workforce. [More than two-thirds of the federal workforce is now prohibited](#) from bargaining for better terms and conditions of employment.<sup>13</sup> President Trump also recently cancelled collective bargaining at [additional agencies](#),<sup>14</sup> suggesting the President intends to end collective bargaining across the entire federal workforce. Busting federal unions undercuts services by worsening working conditions and making it harder to recruit and retain the best workers. Union busting must be stopped.

Federal unions and workers stand with members of Congress who oppose damaging cuts, unconstitutional executive overreach, attacks on science and data itself, and attempts to undercut organized labor. We join together with you in the fight to save and strengthen the many important government programs and services that have been created throughout our country's history to raise standards of living, provide safety, and ensure the continued growth of science, industry, and American prosperity. **Congress must not support a budget that will cause further harm to the American people. We ask that you refuse to support any budget that does not rightfully return the power of the purse to Congress and ensure any and all appropriated funds are spent on our critical public services.**

A government shutdown is never Plan A. Federal workers and the communities we serve will face severe hardship. But federal workers will willingly forego paychecks in the hopes of preserving the programs we have devoted our lives to administering. In order to save our services today, we need to send a message to this Administration that enough is enough.

Respectfully submitted,

The Federal Unionists Network and 35 Sponsoring Unions

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<sup>12</sup> Megan Brennan, *Labor Union Approval Relatively Steady at 68% in U.S.*, Gallup (Aug. 28, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> Erich Wagner, *Appeals Court Will Reconsider Decision to Allow Trump's Anti-Union Order to Take Effect*, Gov't Exec. (Aug. 27, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Fact Sheet, President Donald J. Trump Exempts Agencies with National Security Missions from Federal Collective Bargaining Requirements, White House (Aug. 28, 2025).