

U.S. Sens. Johnson and Collins: Announce legislation to pay 'excepted' workers during shutdown

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Contact:

[Ben Voelkel](#) (Johnson)

[Christopher Knight](#) (Collins)

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) today announced legislation to ensure federal workers that are deemed “excepted” are paid for their work despite the partial government shutdown. The Shutdown Fairness Act authorizes federal agencies affected by the current government shutdown to pay federal personnel that continue to come to work each day and serve the United States. Cosponsors of the bill include Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Todd Young (R-Ind.), Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.).

“The least a dysfunctional Washington, D.C. can do is pay the people we are requiring to work during this shutdown to keep our nation and our homeland safe and secure,” Sen. Johnson said.

“All employees required to work during the shutdown to perform national security and other critical functions should receive paychecks on a current basis. It is not fair to force employees to work and not pay them,” Sen. Collins said. **“Hundreds of thousands of federal employees and their families are being harmed by the partial government shutdown, and I am continuing to work with my colleagues and the White House to bring it to an end as quickly as possible.”**

Background on the Shutdown Fairness Act

- Provides pay to an estimated 420,000 personnel currently working without pay, including personnel from: Commerce, Justice, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, State, Transportation, Treasury, Forest Service, NASA, and SEC.
- Authorizes the use of unappropriated funds to pay personnel previously designated as “excepted” in accordance with section 124 of OMB Circular No. A-11. This is similar to the 2013 Pay Our Military Act, passed by the 113th Congress.
- “Excepted” individuals include those who are performing emergency work, or performing work involving the safety of human life or protection of property.