

October 2, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

The shutdown of the federal government endangers citizens across the country, disrupts the livelihoods of federal workers and threatens our economy and standing abroad.

Eight-hundred thousand federal employees are furloughed, with tens of thousands more serving without pay. Public health is endangered, as the CDC reduces its capacity to respond to outbreak investigations, the NIH disrupts medical research and the FDA becomes, in one official's own words, "unable to keep up most of its food safety, nutrition and cosmetics oversight." The government workers who protect the environment and keep workplaces safe are being pulled off their beats. Even your party's *own initiatives* -- like e-Verify and doling out oil and gas permits for public lands -- are put on hold. The D.C. economy alone loses \$200 million a day due to your actions.

You have made the United States an object of mockery internationally. Indian business executives told *Voice of America* they could not understand how a country as developed as the United States could see its government shutdown because of a legislative impasse. Sniggering for our running the country "a little like a banana republic" has been reported across South Africa. Former Colombian minister of finance José Antonio Ocampo reports that he does not "remember, as a minister of finance of Colombia, a blackmail so absurd like the one that the U.S. government has had to face." *The Times of London* and *The Guardian* are lampooning us and German officials continue to seize "on fiscal policy chaos in the U.S. Congress as a reason to disregard American advice about their handling of Europe's financial problems."

The longer the shutdown goes on, the more veterans are unable to have their education and rehabilitation benefits processed. Poor women with infants and children will soon no longer have aid to feed their families. When small businesses and farms seek government loans, federal loan guarantees and even just help with filing their October 15 taxes, they will be turned away. Millions of tourists to our National Parks, monuments and museums -- including 92 Honor Flight Veterans who attempted to visit the World War II Memorial Tuesday -- face barricades.

Elerky Crosby, a 66-year-old NIH employee, echoing a sentiment assuredly shared by the other 40,512 NIH employees furloughed by your actions, says she is "scared to death" of the effects of the

shutdown. Kevin Bondesen, a 57-year-old human resources worker at the Department of Transportation says, “I might do what I’ve never done in my life: Hold a sign in front of Congress that says, ‘you’re not doing your job; I deserve to be paid.’”

Meanwhile, the \$174,400 salary plus benefits that your fellow House Republicans receive remains constitutionally protected. For every week that goes by when devoted civil servants receive no paycheck, you and your colleagues still receive \$3,354. Is that fair? If you believe that it is not, **you should donate your government pay during the shutdown to a certified charity for the needy**. I will be following up to compile a public list of the Congresspersons who do and do not follow through on this simple act of fairness and decency.

Sincerely,

Ralph Nader

TimeForARaise.org

CC: House Republican Caucus