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November 7, 2025 WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to urge them to pass the *Pay Our Troops Act!* This legislation ensures that members of the Armed Services will be paid in the event of a government shutdown.

The American Legion appreciates all the emails you have sent so far.

Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address>

OCTOBER DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

Kansas	2124
Wisconsin	1641
New York	1259
Florida	1209
Tennessee	1108
Texas	808
California	679

Ohio	677
Pennsylvania	675
Virginia	631
Indiana	600
West Virginia	571
Arizona	570
Illinois	565
New Jersey	532
Washington	473
Massachusetts	440
Michigan	435
North Carolina	387
Missouri	377
Georgia	363
Connecticut	358
Alaska	331
Colorado	310
Minnesota	255
Maryland	249
Nevada	242
Maine	234
Oregon	230
South Carolina	219
Iowa	211
Louisiana	192
Arkansas	174
Nebraska	173
Alabama	151
Montana	136
New Hampshire	127
Rhode Island	116
Oklahoma	113
Utah	109
Mississippi	103
Delaware	96
Idaho	89
Kentucky	81
New Mexico	79
South Dakota	78
Wyoming	49
Vermont	47

North Dakota	39
Puerto Rico	16

These are the number of e-mail messages each Department sent to Congress on VoterVoice campaigns for the month of October.

Register more participants in your Department to increase the number of veteran voices advocating on the Hill!

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN INFORMATION

The American Legion's Government Affairs office is working diligently to keep the Legion Family updated on news related to the government shutdown, which has been in effect since October 1. The most recent vote in the Senate on 10/22 failed 54-46.

On October 14th, The American Legion participated in a joint press conference with other MSO/VSOs to call on Congress to open government and pass the Pay Our Troops Act. You can watch Executive Director Mario Marquez's remarks [here](#).

Click [here](#) to watch National Commander Dan Wiley discuss the impact of the shutdown.

You can visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website to view the VA contingency plan [here](#). It breaks down what services are impacted by the shutdown, as well as what services are operating as normal.

VETERANS FIELD GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to provide quality, consistent care and services to Veterans, families, Caregivers, and Survivors. VA's mission allows no exception to this standard even when operations are limited by the absence of appropriations (commonly known as a "Government shutdown").

SERVICES TO VETERANS NOT IMPACTED:

- VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics, and Vet Centers will be open as usual and providing all services.
- VA benefits will continue to be processed and delivered, including compensation, pension, education, and housing benefits.
- Burials will continue at VA national cemeteries. Applications for headstones, markers, and burial benefits processing will continue.
- The Board of Veterans' Appeals will continue decisions on Veterans' cases.
- Call Centers: VA's primary call center (1-800-MyVA411) and the Veterans Crisis Line (Dial 988, Press 1) will remain open 24/7.
- Suicide prevention programs, homelessness services, and caregiver support will continue.

SERVICES TO VETERANS IMPACTED:

- VA will cease providing transition program assistance and career counseling.
- Call Centers: VA's GI Bill (1-888-GIBILL-1) and National Cemetery Applicant Assistance (1-800-697-6947) hotlines will be closed.
- VA benefits regional offices will be closed.
- Public Affairs and outreach to Veterans will cease, including social media, VetResources emails, and responses to press inquiries.
- No grounds maintenance or placement of permanent headstones at VA cemeteries. Applications for pre-need burial at VA cemeteries will not be processed.
- No printing of new Presidential Memorial Certificates.
- No outreach to state, county, tribal, municipal, faith-based, and community-based partners by VA Central Office.

HAVE A QUESTION? CALL US!

The one number all Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors can use to access VA resources 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year.

1-800-MYVA411 (1-800-698-2411)

In the event of a prolonged shutdown, VA will continue to review and update its plan in conjunction with the applicable legal requirements and circumstances. Please visit www.whitehouse.gov/omb/ or www.VA.gov for updated information.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Download the VA Welcome Kit www.va.gov/welcome-kit/
 Subscribe to #VetResources www.va.gov/vetresources/
 Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then Press 1
 Call 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) or visit <https://www.va.gov/onlinehelp/>

<https://department.va.gov/contingency-planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2025/09/Veteran-Field-Guide-Govt-Shutdown.pdf>

SENATE DEMS WILL HUDDLE ON EMERGING SHUTDOWN DEAL

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

Senate Democrats spent Wednesday touting their big Election Day wins and President Donald Trump's reaction. Today, we'll find out whether that will derail bipartisan talks to end the 37-day-long government shutdown.

Democratic senators are scheduled to hold a special caucus meeting later Thursday. Senators and aides believe the session will determine whether enough Democrats will

back an [emerging deal](#) to reopen the government and vote on a bill extending expiring Obamacare subsidies.

Many Senate Democrats feel emboldened to continue the fight, pointing to the election victories, as well as Trump's [acknowledgment](#) that the shutdown has hurt Republicans politically more than their party.

At the same time, Democrats involved in the bipartisan talks believe that even just a guaranteed vote on Obamacare subsidies could entice enough Republicans to strike a bipartisan compromise that gets 60 votes.

"The goal of all Democrats is to extend the tax credits for all Americans. It's a very simple goal," said Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.), who wants an Obamacare deal before voting to end the shutdown. "How we get there in the face of Trump's opposition remains to be seen."

Speaker Mike Johnson, though, has not committed to a vote in the House on Obamacare subsidies, which is giving some Democrats pause.

It only takes a handful of Democrats to vote to reopen the government. As we [reported](#) on Wednesday, senators and aides involved in the bipartisan talks came away from a closed-door huddle believing there are still a dozen or so Democrats willing to stay the course.

Those Democrats, however, were tight-lipped on Wednesday, preferring to let their party's election wins marinate. Other Democrats sought to convince their colleagues to hold out for a better deal.

"I think we're in an enormously strong position right now to make a big difference for the people we represent," Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) said. "Nobody in my state whose premiums are doubling cares about a failed vote that has some relevance for a future election... The American people told us last night to use our power to fight for the things we believe in."

The Senate is scheduled to have floor votes later in the day than usual for a Thursday. Senate Majority Leader John Thune hasn't decided yet whether to keep the chamber in session through the weekend. Thune previously said he'd need to see real signs of progress in order to keep senators in town.

In the meantime, more shutdown-induced pain is coming. The Department of Transportation announced a 10% reduction in flight capacity at 40 major airports beginning Friday. This will snarl air travel nationwide.

Fault lines. The debate among Senate Democrats is the same as it's always been — whether to accept a commitment for a vote rather than a pre-negotiated Obamacare deal with both Trump and the GOP-run House.

Senate Republicans remain adamant in their view that Democrats want something that GOP leaders simply cannot deliver.

“We’ve made it very clear that you open up [the] government and then we can work on a solution that will actually stand the test of time, including one that our president could perhaps consider supporting and convincing the House to support,” said Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), who’s involved in the bipartisan talks.

But Democrats are pointing to Trump’s belief that the shutdown has hurt Republicans more than Democrats as evidence that it’s entirely possible Trump wants to end the crisis by cutting a health care deal with Democrats and making Hill Republicans vote for it.

It’s why Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries re-upped their request for a bipartisan meeting with Trump.

“Trump may not be able to bully them on the filibuster, but he can absolutely muster 10 votes for anything he wants,” Murphy added.

ARMY EXTENDS CONTRACT FOR SOLDIERS NEARING END OF SERVICE DUE TO SHUTDOWN

This article’s original publication can be found [here](#)



The Army is extending the tour of service for soldiers with upcoming separation dates by 45 days as a result of the federal government shutdown, an official confirmed on Wednesday.

“Soldiers scheduled to transition out of the Army with separation dates during the government shutdown will be extended by 45 days to ensure proper transition,” Army spokesman Maj. Travis Shaw said in a statement.

It is unclear exactly how many soldiers are being extended.

The Army needs to extend soldiers due to the [Antideficiency Act](#), a federal law that prevents the federal government from obligating or spending money during such funding lapses, Shaw said.

“Failure to extend personnel may result in losing access to base, housing, benefits, pay, reimbursement for travel, and household goods shipment,” Shaw said. “As an Army priority, the extension is for the soldier’s and their family’s health and welfare.”

The Army’s announcement comes after [a document began circulating on social media](#) on Tuesday that purportedly showed that soldiers would be extended as a result of the shutdown. After the document was shared to the [Army WTF! Moments’ Facebook page](#), it prompted comparisons online to [stop loss](#), a policy under which service members are involuntarily retained on active duty beyond the end of their contract.

Between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, an estimated 185,000 service members were involuntarily retained in the military through stop loss, [according to the Army](#).

The ongoing government shutdown began on Oct. 1 after Congress failed to pass a spending bill to keep the federal government operating. No end to the impasse appears to be in sight.

Army civilians and contractors who are affected by the shutdown oversee much of the administrative process dealing with soldiers' separations, said [Katherine Kuzminski](#), director of the Military, Veterans, and Society Program at the Center for a New American Security think tank in Washington, D.C.

"The Antideficiency Act prevents the federal government from incurring additional costs during the shutdown — which would include using furloughed federal employees or new fiscal year contracts to those running soldier out processing," Kuzminski told Task & Purpose on Wednesday.

When asked if the Army's decision to extend soldiers was similar to stop loss, Kuzminski said there are differences between the two types of actions.

"While the impact may be felt similarly to stop-loss for the individual soldier — they aren't able to separate — the underlying legal rationale is very different from stop-loss based in [\[Title 10 of the U.S. Code, Section 12305\]](#)," Kuzminski said. "The president has the authority to enact stop-loss during a national emergency (a time of war) to meet requirements, and is based on retaining those from either specific career fields necessary to the national interest or retaining specific units for an active national security requirement."

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Stephen Blowers, New York

Stephen, thank you for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities; we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Last week, Stephen met with the offices of Senator Chuck Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. With these offices, he discussed the VSAFE Act of 2025 and the Daniel J. Harvey Jr. And Adam Lambert Improving Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act. He asked the Senators' offices for their support on these bills, as well as support for improving living conditions for the military and to continue support in finding POW and MIAs.

Thank you, Stephen, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our [information papers and Legislative priorities](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill and the *Legislative Meeting Worksheet* are now available for viewing and download on The Legion's website. You can find them and other legislative resources on the [Legislative Advocacy Resources & Toolkit page](#).

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

Register for Action Alerts today at
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 11/7, there are no hearings scheduled.

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)