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October 3, 2025

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to urge them to negotiate in good faith and fund the government to protect veterans' services. As of 3:00 on October 3, Congress failed to come to an agreement to pass full government funding, and as a result, the government is still shut down. Veterans and their families rely on stability in government to know their essential benefits, like claims processing and community care, remain uninterrupted. As of today, the U.S. Coast Guard and military personnel are forced to go without pay while performing essential missions.

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>

TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS

Kansas	349
Florida	269
Texas	215
New York	215
Wisconsin	214

These are the number of e-mail messages these Departments sent to Congress on the VoterVoice campaigns this past week.

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. On the afternoon of October 3, the Senate held a vote on the continuing resolution to fund the government, which failed to pass.

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.



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)



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.

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/contact-us/>

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

HOW WILL THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IMPACT THE U.S. MILITARY?

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

Congress failed to reach a funding deal by Wednesday morning's deadline, leading to a government shutdown that will force active-duty service members to continue to serve without pay until a deal is made.

During a government shutdown, all active-duty personnel, as well as National Guard who are currently deployed, must carry out their assigned duties with their pay delayed until the shutdown is over. Civilian personnel whose work the Defense Department considers essential, or "excepted," will also continue to work, while other civilians are furloughed for the duration of the shutdown.

"After the government shutdown, all government employees will automatically receive back pay, based on the terms of the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019," said Seamus Daniels, a fellow for Defense Budget Analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Active-duty service members won't get paid on time unless Congress passes a separate piece of legislation, as it did in 2013 with the "Pay Our Military Act," which ensured military pay and allowances continued during a government shutdown.

Republican Rep. Jen Kiggans of Virginia introduced a bill earlier this month with bipartisan support, the "Pay Our Troops Act of 2026," which would keep members of the military and Coast Guard paid during a shutdown, but it did not pass in time because the House is out of session until Oct 7.

During the last shutdown in 2019, the Navy Federal Credit Union and USAA offered special loans to members of the military, and they plan to do so again if there's a shutdown in October. The Navy Federal Credit Union said in a press release it would "offer 0% APR loans to eligible members whose pay may be affected, continuing a tradition of assistance seen during previous shutdowns in 2011, 2013 and 2018-2019, when nearly 20,000 members received support." USAA plans to offer eligible members who have accounts with the bank a "no-interest loan equal to the amount of one net paycheck."

The Defense Department published contingency guidance on Friday, outlining its priority missions and stating that unused funds passed in the reconciliation bill over the summer could be considered to support them. The list includes, in order: operations to secure the U.S. Southern Border, Middle East operations, the U.S. missile defense project Golden Dome for America, depot maintenance, shipbuilding and critical munitions.

The guidance estimates about 406,000 of the department's 741,000 civilian employees will be required to work in the event of a shutdown because their mission is critical and not easily carried out by any U.S. service member.

While a memo from the White House Office of Management and Budget said some civilians could be laid off during the shutdown, the guidance released by the Defense Department outlines furloughs but no cuts to the civilian workforce.

During the shutdown, medical care and dental care will be excepted, according to the contingency guidance, but elective surgeries and other elective procedures would be delayed unless they're necessary for military readiness. Private health care using the Defense Department's TRICARE medical insurance would continue uninterrupted.

WHAT'S AFFECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Here's what the current shutdown means for veterans, servicemembers, their families and national security.

With Congress locked in a budget battle and unable to reach a compromise, the U.S. government went into a partial shutdown at 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 1. While some critical government functions will continue to operate, others will be paused.

Those U.S. citizens who collect Social Security – including retirees, disabled Americans and the dependents of deceased workers – won't see an interruption in their monthly payments during the shutdown. Food assistance programs will continue until they run out of funds.

While U.S. military operations will continue during a shutdown, U.S. servicemembers will miss at least one paycheck if a budget deal isn't in place by Oct. 15. A shutdown also will force the furlough of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, including those in public affairs and community outreach personnel, financial management personnel and acquisition personnel.

For the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the department estimates that 97 percent of its employee will continue to work during a shutdown. VA benefits will continue to be processed and delivered, including compensation, pension, education and housing benefits. However, VA benefits regional offices are closed.

VA medical centers, outpatient clinics and Vet Centers remain open.

Here is an overview of how VA services, other DoD operations and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are affected.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Programs not impacted

- 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. The VA Benefit Hotline (1-800-827-1000) will be available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.
- Suicide prevention programs, homelessness services, and caregiver support will continue.

Impacted programs

- 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.

U.S. Department of Defense

- **Operations.** Subordinate leaders in the DoD have the authority to evaluate and determine whether activities are "excepted" for supporting high priority efforts and for the safety of human life and protection of property. As of September 2025, the department considers the following among its highest priorities: Operations to secure the U.S. Southern Border, Middle East Operations, Golden Dome for America, Depot Maintenance, Shipbuilding and Critical Munitions.
- **Servicemember Impact.** Though not getting paid, active-duty servicemembers, including reserve component personnel on federal active duty, will continue to report for duty and carry out assigned duties. National Guard servicemembers performing duties under Title 32 will be terminated unless such duties are in support of excepted activities defined by the department. Reserve servicemembers performing Active Guard Reserve (AGR) duty will continue to carry out AGR authorized duties for the period of their AGR tour. Reserve servicemembers will not perform inactive duty resulting in the obligation of funds, except in support of military operations necessary for national security, disaster response or fulfilling pre-deployment requirements. And Temporary Duty Travel

(TDY) scheduled to begin after the shutdown may be cancelled if not in support of an excepted activity, such as returning to one's official duty station. Those on PCS orders attending training and educational activities may continue to attend classes only if the instructor is military or is a contractor paid with prior year funds. PCS orders for duty station changes may be impacted if not funded with prior year funds.

- **Quality of Life Impact:** On the medical side, inpatient care, acute and emergency outpatient care in DoD medical facilities will continue during a shutdown. Elective surgeries and other procedures may be postponed or canceled. Private health care through TRICARE will not be affected. Services and counseling for victims of sexual assault, religious, suicide, substance abuse, counterdrug activities and operations of mortuary affairs will still be provided during a shutdown. On the education side, schools that are operated by the Department of Defense Education Activity will remain open, but sports and extracurricular activities will result in a pause during a shutdown. Mess hall operations, physical training and "childcare activities required for readiness" would continue in a shutdown. Meanwhile, the operation of childcare centers is still to be determined. During past shutdowns, childcare centers depended on the level of base staffing and demand. Thus, a shutdown would affect childcare on a case-by-case basis.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- **Impact** to operations. DHS secures U.S. borders and critical infrastructures, while protecting the U.S. from hybrid threats. A shutdown would disrupt DHS's ability to work effectively, leaving Americans less safe. Without proper pay, both members of the U.S. Coast Guard and border agents may have less productivity due to financial uncertainty, further decreasing DHS's ability.
- **U.S. Coast Guard:** The 40,000 active-duty members of the U.S. Coast Guard will continue to work and will only be compensated for their unpaid work if an appropriation is passed. Members of the Coast Guard are unable to file for interim support that would supplement their income. During the longest government shutdown (2019), members needed severe assistance for the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing and health expenses.
- **Border Patrol:** U.S. border crossings will stay open, and border agents will continue to work without pay. Along the U.S. northern and southern borders, roughly 19,000 Border Patrol agents will be required to report to work. Most agents patrol the U.S.-Mexico border region, staffing field stations, interior checkpoints and temporary holding facilities. Approximately 25,000 U.S. customs officers would be required to work at some 300 land and airports of entry without pay.

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!

Recently, Stephen met with Congressman Joe Morelle as well as his Deputy Director of Community Affairs. While in his meeting, they discussed many legislative efforts to support servicemembers, including HR 1663 (VSAFE Act of 2025) and HR 2878 (Daniel J Harvey Jr and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act). They also discussed passing legislation to expand financial assistance to servicemembers for childcare facilities, retaining quality of life programs, and repairing or constructing dining facilities at DoD facilities.

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 10/3, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Tuesday, October 7, 9:30 AM: Senate Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Nomination Hearing -- *"To consider the nominations of: Mr. John Noh to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs; Mr. Charles L. Young III to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army; Mr. William K. Lane III to be General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force; and Mr. David E. Beck to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration"*
- Tuesday, October 7, 2:30 PM: Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities -- *"To receive testimony on threats and challenges posed to Department of Defense personnel and*

operations from adversarial access to publicly available data coupled with advanced data analysis tools now widely available on the commercial market”

- Thursday, October 9, 9:30 AM: Senate Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Nomination Hearing -- *“To consider the nomination of: General Kenneth S. Wilsbach, USAF for reappointment to the grade of general and to be Chief of Staff of the Air Force”*

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](#)