



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

501 3rd Street, NW, Suite 701, Washington, DC 20001
202-239-4880 • FAX 202-239-4881 • www.ifpte.org

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September 26, 2022

Dear Senator,

As the executive officers of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), a labor union representing upwards of 90,000 workers in the federal, public, and private sector, we are writing to urge you in the strongest sense possible to pass a continuing resolution to fund the federal government through mid-December 2022 and do so in time to avert a government shutdown at the end of this week.

Passing a Continuing Resolution will allow Congressional Appropriators in both chambers the needed time to negotiate and pass all twelve Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations bills by the end of the year. Failing to pass a short-term budget extension would result in an unnecessary and avoidable government shutdown that will impact Americans and the U.S. economy when we can least afford it.

IFPTE members know well the far-reaching implications and costs associated with government shutdowns. Many of our federal sector members – working at Navy shipyards and facilities, the Army Corps of Engineers, NASA, NOAA, the Immigration Court, GAO, Congressional Research Service, the Social Security Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, EPA, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the Department of Energy – have lived through several shutdowns in the last 25 years. Many of those members deemed “essential” have worked without pay through shutdowns. The consequences of these shutdowns show up not only in increased costs to taxpayers, reduced military readiness, expensive delays to projects and research, payment disruptions to government contractors, and suspension of important services and public safety measures – it also impacts the morale, financial security, retention rates of the diverse population of federal workers who have chosen a career in the civil service. For federal employees with security clearances, a government shutdown creates the possibility of employees being unable to meet financial obligations through no fault of their own. This can have a serious effect on their ability to maintain or qualify for those clearances and may be detrimental to their career.

While immediate action is needed to avoid a government shutdown, funding the government through continuing resolutions is wholly inadequate and can leave critically needed public services without resources. Therefore, we request bipartisan support to include the following:

- **Reauthorization of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**, which expired on June 30, 2022. Each year, this program provides retraining and job certifications to approximately 100,000 workers who have lost their jobs due to corporate offshoring and harmful outcomes of our global trade policies. Currently, workers laid off after June 30 who would otherwise be eligible for TAA will not receive these benefits. Restoring TAA should be a top priority for all Senators as this is an investment in American workers in all states and in our economy.

- **\$800 million in additional funding for the Social Security Administration (SSA)**, so that Americans who rely on SSA benefits and services are not unnecessarily burdened or harmed by delays. As it stands, SSA's budget shrank 14% between 2010 and 2021, all while the number of SSA beneficiaries increased by 22%. The impact of this dramatic underfunding is ultimately borne by retirees and disabled Americans receiving SSA benefits as well as those requesting benefits. We urge you to increase SSA funding levels in order to repair the resource shortfalls of the past decade.
- **Immediate emergency aid and disaster relief**, including aid to provide drinking water to residents of Jackson, Mississippi and repair the water system and assistance to Puerto Rico to help recovery efforts from Hurricane Fiona. Additionally, we are encouraged to hear that there may be bipartisan support for urgent aid to Ukraine and Afghan refugee resettlement and we request those provisions be included in the continuing resolution.
- **Funding to extend our free school meals** to all student throughout this academic year. For the last two years, public schools have been able to provide free meals at school to students, helping to reduce child hunger and ensure that our nation's children are not left hungry at school. Extending this program will also ensure that States and Localities are not offsetting other critical public services in order to meet the nutritional needs of students.

Above all, Congress must avoid this absurd threat of a government shutdown in the days ahead. We urge you to work in a bipartisan manner to pass a continuing resolution by Friday. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us directly, or IFPTE legislative director Faraz Khan at (202) 239-4892.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Biggs
IFPTE President



Gay Henson
IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer