



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO

Hon. John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

January 28, 2026

Dear Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM), which represents more than 110,000 federal employees nationwide, we urge you to move forward with the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) appropriations bills that already commanded bipartisan support before the January 30 funding deadline. We further request that the FY26 Homeland Security appropriations measure be considered separately, as it currently lacks the bipartisan consensus necessary for passage.

Recent events in Minnesota underscore why the Homeland Security bill, as passed by the House, is unlikely to advance in its current form. Over the weekend, Alex Pretti, a federal employee and registered nurse at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Minneapolis, was shot and killed by federal agents from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This follows the killing of Minneapolis resident Renee Good by federal agents from DHS just weeks earlier. These incidents occurred amid an aggressive federal immigration enforcement initiative known as “Operation Metro Surge,” which is now the subject of multiple federal court challenges, including litigation brought by the State of Minnesota and several class actions alleging systemic violations of constitutional and due process rights. In response, bipartisan calls for oversight of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Even before this weekend’s tragedy, House leadership recognized that the Homeland Security appropriations bill (H.R. 7147) lacked the bipartisan support needed to move forward as part of a larger funding package. Accordingly, the House separated that bill from the Defense, Labor-Health and Human Services, and Transportation-Housing and Urban Development minibus (H.R. 7148). We respectfully request that the Senate take the same approach and consider the FY26 Homeland Security appropriations bill as a standalone measure.

Not separating the Homeland Security bill from the remaining appropriations measures risks triggering a partial government shutdown. Such an outcome would leave more than one million federal employees without pay, including hundreds of thousands who would still be required to report to work. Our members want to serve the public and keep government functioning, not endure another avoidable shutdown. Americans across the country who rely on services provided by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, State, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation likewise do not want these essential operations disrupted. Federal employees know from experience that shutdowns are costly, inefficient, economically harmful, and damaging to the delivery of public services. Five appropriations bills with clear bipartisan support should not be stalled by a single bill that lacks a path forward.

The Senate has a clear opportunity to act. By advancing the FY26 Defense, Labor-Health and Human Services, Transportation-Housing and Urban Development, Financial Services-General Government, and National Security-State appropriations bills this week, the Senate can prevent a harmful shutdown.

We strongly urge you to do so by separating these measures from the FY26 Homeland Security appropriations bill. As deliberations on Homeland Security funding continue, Congress can and should extend short-term funding for essential DHS functions, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Transportation Security Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact Steve Lenkart, NFFE-IAM Executive Director, at slenkart@nffe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Erwin".

Randy Erwin
National President
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM)