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**Congressional Delegation Joins Unpaid Federal Employees to Call for End to
Trump Shutdown**

Hundreds of federal employees in Rhode Island have gone without pay since the shutdown began even as they perform critical services

WARWICK, R.I. — U.S. Congressmen Jim Langevin and David Cicilline and U.S. Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse joined federal employees at T.F. Green Airport today to call on President Trump to immediately reopen the federal government. Since the shutdown began 24 days ago, an estimated 800,000 federal workers — including hundreds of TSA agents and air traffic controllers at T.F. Green — have either been furloughed or required to work without a paycheck.

“We rely on TSA agents and air traffic controllers to keep the traveling public safe and secure, and they deserve better than to be left wondering if they will be able to pay their bills,” said **Congressman Jim Langevin**, a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security. “Democrats have provided President Trump with several opportunities to end this self-imposed and unnecessary shutdown. It’s time for the President to work with Democrats to reopen the government and provide stability for our federal workers and the American people.”

“This senseless shut down is hurting working people here in Rhode Island and across America. Each week, it costs our economy more than \$1 billion,” said **Congressman Cicilline**. “Last week, the House approved spending bills that already passed the Senate unanimously. But Mitch McConnell won’t take them up again without the President’s permission. It’s time for President Trump to end this shut down and get back to work on the real challenges facing our country.”

“Every day it drags on, the Trump shutdown is making our country less safe. Republicans need to join Democrats to end this wasteful shutdown, re-open the government, and get our country working again,” said **Senator Reed**. “I support stronger, smarter border security. Real border security requires strategic investments in places where they are actually needed. President Trump’s vanity wall would actually make our nation less safe because it would take away public safety resources and divert them to a wall whose main objective seems to be guarding President Trump’s political right flank.”

"This shutdown has caused unnecessary hardship for the T.F. Green employees and other federal workers around the state who have not been paid said," said **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse**. "The Senate Republican majority has the power to end President Trump's shutdown today, voting for bills they've already supported, and making these hardworking Rhode Islanders whole."

Joining Rhode Island's congressional delegation were representatives from the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Region 2, who spoke about the challenges faced by federal employees who have been furloughed or required to work without pay for almost a month.

"Across the country, hundreds of thousands of hardworking federal employees are being denied pay and millions are left without critical government services as this shutdown continues," said **George Nee, the President of the R.I. AFL-CIO**. "Many of our members in Rhode Island are being required to work without a paycheck and don't have any idea how they will pay their outstanding bills. This shutdown is unnecessary and detrimental to so many people. We must reopen the government immediately."

"The partial government shutdown is detrimental to the safety and efficiency of our National Airspace System (NAS)", said **Peter Geddis, the President of the NATCA R.I.**

Chapter. "Approximately 3,000 NATCA-represented FAA safety professionals are furloughed. The FAA has suspended hiring and closed its training academy in Oklahoma City where new air traffic controller hires begin their careers. The number of fully certified controllers is now at a 30-year low. If the staffing shortage gets any worse, we will see reduced capacity in the NAS, meaning more flight delays. Air traffic control is an already stressful job, and the added stress of not being paid, and not knowing when you'll be paid, makes matters much worse. NATCA will always be fully committed to the safety of the NAS, but this government shutdown must end now."

"Our employees strongly oppose being collateral damage in this prolonged government shutdown," said **Frank Womack, an AFGE Region 2 Representative**. "Many of our employees – including TSA agents here at T.F. Green Airport – cannot afford to miss a single paycheck without falling behind on their mortgage, car payments, and other financial obligations. Sadly, these hardships are only getting worse and more widespread as the shutdown drags on. The government must be reopened immediately so our employees can collect the pay they've rightly earned."

Two weeks ago, House Democrats passed comprehensive legislation to reopen the government. Last week, House Democrats passed four funding bills, all of which had passed the Senate with overwhelming Republican support last Congress and would reopen parts of the government while border security negotiations continue. To date, the President has rejected them. On Saturday, January 12, the Trump shutdown became the longest in American history.

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