

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 10, 2019

The Honorable Russell Vought
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Vought:

We are writing to urge you to direct federal agencies to work with contractors to provide back pay to compensate low- and middle-income contractor employees for the wages they have lost as a result of not being able to report to work during this government shutdown.

Contract workers and their families should not suffer the consequences of a shutdown that they did not cause. Low-wage service contract workers perform jobs that are absolutely vital to the government, such as food service, security, and custodial work. Many of these workers live paycheck-to-paycheck, and cannot afford to pay their rent and other bills if the shutdown continues.

After past shutdowns, contractor employees have generally not received back pay. In addition to our fight to protect federal workers who are being hurt by this shutdown, we are committed to righting this wrong for contractor employees. Government contracts typically have provisions to modify the terms of the contract. Federal contracting officers should use these provisions to work with contractors to provide back pay for employees who lost wages as a result of the government shutdown.

Providing back pay to these low- and middle-income contractor employees who are furloughed by their employers is the right thing to do, and it is in the federal government's best interest to provide funding to the extent necessary to ensure that contractors deliver back pay to their workers. Contractor employees cannot afford the chaos and uncertainty of government shutdowns, and some of these workers may seek other jobs if back pay is not provided to compensate for shutdown-related losses.

Most of all, this wasteful and destructive government shutdown must come to an end. We all support the legislation passed by the House of Representatives to reopen the government, which mirrors legislation that previously passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support.

We urge you to take immediate steps to ensure that contractor employees get the back pay that they deserve by providing clear directions for agencies and contractors to do so.


Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your reply.


Sincerely,

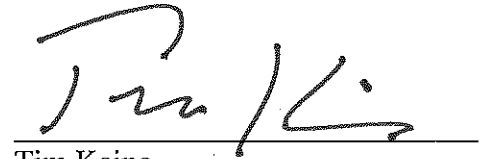

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

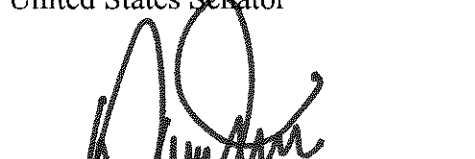

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

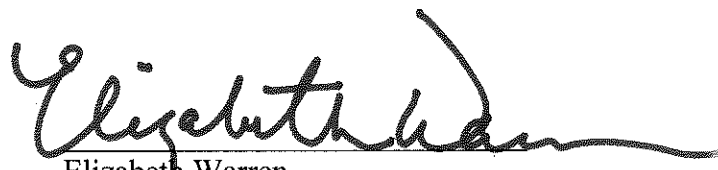

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

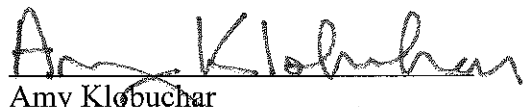

Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

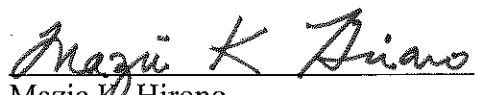

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator

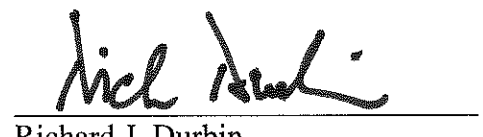

Doug Jones
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator


Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

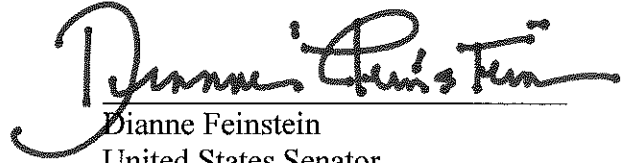

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Tom Udall
United States Senator



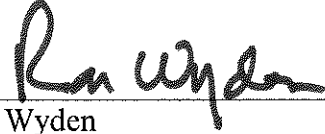
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



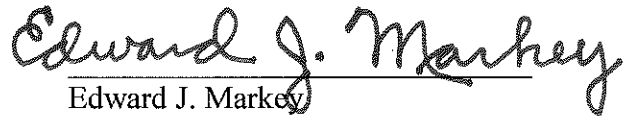
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



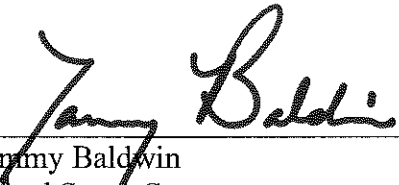
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



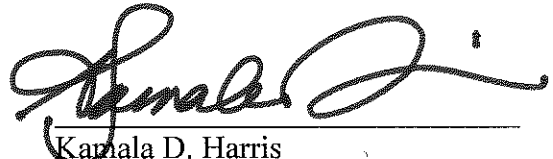
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



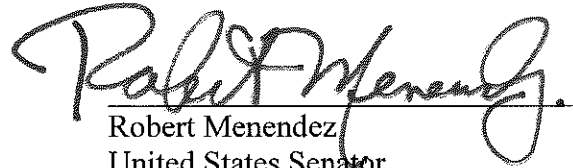
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



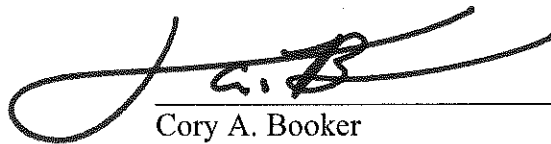
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



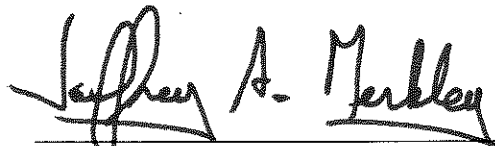
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



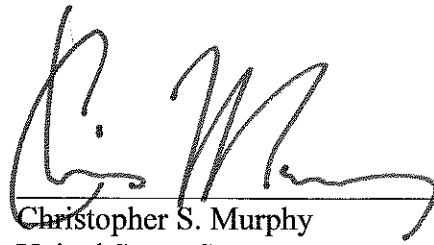
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator