



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

January 14, 2019

The Honorable Alexander Acosta
Secretary of Labor
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Acosta:

As Mayor of Washington, DC, I write today on behalf of federal workers who face an unintended consequence of the partial government shutdown. These workers, who must continue to work for the federal government without pay, are considered ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. I urge you to allow the District to provide these benefits, without repercussion or penalty, for excepted and essential employees who are working during this shutdown.

This partial government shutdown is now the longest in history. For the past three weeks, roughly 800,000 federal workers have either been without work or must continue to work without pay. In the National Capital Region, at least 7,127 federal employees and contractors have applied for unemployment benefits since the shutdown began. And, in the District alone, 5,897 federal workers and contractors have applied for unemployment benefits. The District government has stepped up to process thousands of unemployment claims for furloughed workers and we hope to do the same for those deemed excepted or essential.

Currently, federal workers who are deemed excepted or essential must remain on the job on a full-time basis without pay and without the ability to claim unemployment insurance benefits. These federal workers are providing the nation and our region with vital services such as public safety. Without a steady paycheck or unemployment benefits, hardworking federal workers and their families are forced to make difficult decisions: pay the mortgage or buy groceries; pay for a doctor's appointment or pay to keep the lights on. These are decisions no one should have to make.

Federal workers and their families should not suffer the consequences of others' actions. I urge you to support the District and other state governments in taking the necessary actions to ensure all federal employees affected by the partial government shutdown can apply for unemployment insurance benefits during this unfortunate time. We continue to urge the Trump Administration and Congressional leadership to work together to bring an immediate end to this shutdown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser
Mayor