

The TSA worries lines may get even longer if more screeners call out sick.

Tomorrow could be a tipping point when 51,000 screeners may miss their first paychecks.

TSA agents are considered essential employees and must report to work even though they aren't getting paid during the shutdown.

Houston is also home to one of the greatest aeronautical institutions all the world—the Johnson Space Center.

There are more than 16,000 NASA employees still out of work as the federal government shutdown.

The partial government shutdown impacts 800,000 of the 2.1 million federal workers nationwide, including 16,700 NASA employees, which accounts for 96 percent of the workforce.

Although most of NASA's employees will be furloughed, those responsible for keeping people and property safe are exempted from the shutdown.

For example, International Space Station operations will continue: about 200 of the 3,055 federal employees at Johnson Space Center in Houston will continue working primarily to keep the three astronauts aboard the space station alive.

But that is only the beginning of the problem.

Houston citizens are unable to seek temporary private sector work because such jobs require permission, and the people who process those requests have been furloughed.

Federally funded housing programs are in jeopardy as the shutdown stretches on.

For example, rural home loans financed by the USDA are not an option.

Texans who were affected by Hurricane Harvey are still waiting for federal aid, and the shutdown won't make it any easier to get that aid.

Harris County is putting a hold on Harvey recovery projects that relied in part on federal money.

The Treasury Department's loss of funding means some Texas wineries and breweries can't get federal approval of labels allowing their products to be sold across state lines.

Federal employees are required to work throughout the shutdown without pay, like corrections officers and Border Patrol agents.

Agencies such as the national parks, NASA and some IRS employees have been sent home or furloughed in Houston, Texas.

There are any number of cascading effects—Local restaurants are feeling the impact as well; federal employees who frequent nearby eateries for meals are no longer eating out.

Federal courts are grinding to a halt and national parks are shuttered.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN FREEDOM FUND

(Mr. BARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a group of veterans who have come together to found the non-profit American Freedom Fund.

These three patriots—Petty Officer Gabriel Stecker, Major Rob Miller, and Lieutenant Donald Bramer, a fellow Kentuckian—have selflessly taken on

an issue that faces many of our veterans when separated from service or returned home from operations abroad, to include loneliness and void of community, preventable circumstances that magnify wounds both seen and unseen.

Through the American Freedom Fund's mission of athletics, education, and advocacy, their programs have brought hundreds of Active Reserve and veteran servicemembers together to play softball, enjoy sporting events, find that next career, or, more importantly, know that they are never alone.

It is with great pleasure and pride that I commend these patriots and the troops of volunteers that make up the American Freedom Fund for their dedication and continued service to this Nation and its heroes.

SHUTDOWN IS HARMING THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA

(Ms. SPANBERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise the alarm and sound the alarm about the shutdown and how it is harming the people of central Virginia.

Across the country, hundreds of thousands of Federal employees are working without pay or are furloughed, including critical law enforcement personnel. The best way to illustrate the destructive effects of this shutdown is to share a story from one of my constituents in Virginia's Seventh District. She said to us:

My husband is a Federal employee and the sole provider for our family, and right now, we don't know when he'll get paid. Because I got sick last year, we now have less money in the bank, and we're not sure how we can hold on.

While he could make more money in the private sector, my husband believes that working in a Federal job is his way of making a difference through public service—and every day, he is proud to go into the office at 5 a.m. to do what he can to serve his country.

One of the hardest days of his life was when he came home and said that earlier that day, he had told those under him that they were furloughed—just days before Christmas.

We are begging you to reopen the government.

This story demonstrates the importance of fixing this mess and reopening the government.

I encourage my colleagues and leadership to act now in a bipartisan way to protect the livelihoods of these hardworking families.

□ 1645

LET'S GET THE GOVERNMENT OPEN NOW

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, recently, I have heard many of my Democratic colleagues, and even more in the media, saying that our President has manufactured a crisis at the southern border and that there is no need for funding to secure it properly.

Tell Ingrid Lake there is no crisis. Her 6-year-old boy, Lennox, sustained a life-altering injury as a result of an illegal alien's criminal behavior, and that individual had previously been deported 15 times.

Tell Officer Ronil Singh's family there is no crisis. Officer Singh was recently shot in cold blood by an illegal alien after a traffic stop.

Last year alone, border security intercepted about 17,000 people with no criminal convictions at our border.

Members, those who oppose our President at any cost, refuse to see the truth. But, to me, and I believe to all who objectively consider the circumstances, there is clearly a full-blown legitimate crisis. It is one we have been ignoring for far too long. An overwhelming majority of constituents calling my office in the last few days agree.

Mr. Speaker, let's get this government open now, and let's authorize the money necessary to ensure the security of our people.

GUN VIOLENCE

(Ms. DEAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand as a Member of Congress for my first floor speech. I purposefully rise to speak about the issue of gun violence and, specifically, H.R. 8.

Last year, 40,000 people in America died of gun violence, over half to suicide. Another 80,000 people were wounded, literally caught in the crossfire.

This week, I was honored to stand with Gabby Giffords—a woman whose public service inspired my own—the Speaker, and Chairman THOMPSON to cosponsor H.R. 8.

Background checks work and the public knows we must pass this legislation to save lives.

As I worked with Gabby Giffords, I was reminded of the words of Robert Frost marking JFK's inauguration. He wrote: "Courage is in the air."

We must act on that courage.

IT IS UP TO CONGRESS TO ACT

(Mr. MEUSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, the information is clear:

17,000 criminals were apprehended by Customs and Border Patrol agents at our southern border last year.

90 percent of the heroin ravaging American families comes across our southern border.

400,000 immigrants were apprehended attempting to come here illegally last year.