

American people, for the role they play in providing the public-sector promise that we make to people to meet their needs, to provide the services of the courts and the protections of our security in terms of the FBI, of TSA, of the Coast Guard.

The cost of this shutdown—the Coast Guard is the only defense entity that is not being paid. Because this is a 25 percent shutdown, 75 percent of the workforce is at work. The Department of Defense is at work, but the Department of Homeland Security is not, and that is what the Coast Guard falls under.

Imagine those responsible for search and rescue and emergency situations having to go to food banks to get food for their families. How does that keep them as strong as they can possibly be, as strong as they can possibly be to search and rescue and to protect us? They are a line of defense in securing our borders.

A lot of the discussion is about secure borders. Well, our borders extend to the seas, and our Coast Guard is our line of defense there. In our proposals for the opening up of government, we have funding for our Coast Guard for assets that they have asked us for.

This is a tragedy in so many respects. It shouldn't go on any longer. We should at least be able to discuss and compare the merits of our different proposals, and we should be able to do that with government open and not holding the American people hostage, Federal employees hostage, the security of our people hostage, and the safety and well-being of our children hostage to an idle campaign applause line that the President seems committed to at this time.

EFFECTS OF THE SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MCCOLLUM). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I am pleased we are able to be here tonight to have an hour with some of my colleagues to continue this conversation about the hardships people are facing due to this shutdown and the impact it is having on our country.

We have had so many interesting stories and tragic recollections of exactly what people are going through. As our Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, just said, we are holding Federal employees hostage; we are holding the safety of our country hostage; we are holding the American people hostage; and it is time to get the government going again and resolve our differences.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maine?

There was no objection.

Ms. PINGREE. So today is the 34th day of the longest government shutdown in history. It is a shutdown that has no excuse, and it has taken a great toll on dedicated public servants and their families across America.

Americans who have jobs are actually standing in line at food pantries here in Washington and back home in my State of Maine.

This Chamber, as of today, has voted 11 times to fund the government, to pay 800,000 workers, and to restart essential services.

President Trump's unwillingness to reopen the government is tone deaf to the financial circumstances of working Americans. Most are living paycheck to paycheck, pay mortgages and healthcare premiums, and need to keep food on the table. Government workers and contractors cannot afford these weeks being held hostage.

People who rely on government programs like SNAP and housing vouchers are feeling the stress. They cannot afford these weeks of being held hostage.

Businesses that are losing opportunities to expand and grow their businesses cannot afford these 3 weeks of being held hostage.

The consequences of this shutdown have rippled through our State and national economies. Members of Maine's Coast Guard, who protect us every single day, are about to miss their second paycheck while actively serving to protect our working waterfronts.

The USDA's partial closure in Maine has put Maine farmers in financial limbo, and SNAP benefits for Maine's most vulnerable are on the verge of a lapse. Many of Maine's craft brewers, who added \$260 million to our State economy last year, have had to put new products and their businesses on hold.

At this time, I will share a few of the stories about what is happening and what we are hearing from our constituents in Maine as a result of this shutdown. I will read just a few clips from letters I received and the stories Mainers have shared with the local news, and I will outline some of the broader problems this historic shutdown has created for real people.

We heard from a brewery in the process of expanding to a second location. They had all their paperwork in with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau in the Department of the Treasury when the shutdown began, but now that brewer is waiting with an empty storefront.

Another brewery is just waiting for approval to open six new types of beer, all sitting and ready to be sold. As the owner says:

January is already a tough time in Maine, as I hope you know, and to lose out on weeks of sales because of the shutdown may cause us to close our doors. Please, I implore you, do what you can to get the shutdown over with.

We hear from a lot of Federal employees in our State. Here is one that says:

Please do whatever you can to reopen the government. I have 28 years of Federal service and do not appreciate my financial security being jeopardized by the President.

Another says:

Please do everything you can to help end the government shutdown. As a furloughed Federal employee, the anxiety of not knowing when or if I will be paid grows with every day of the shutdown. I have savings to cover a few months of living expenses, but I know many in this situation don't. We just want to get back to work, and we don't want to be used as pawns.

Another says:

I am exempted from furlough, and I am mandated to work without pay. This shutdown is crushing me. I am a single father of three who just went from a one-income household to a no-income household. I keep hearing the President insist that Federal workers support this. I must have missed that poll. No one has asked me for my input. Please help end this shutdown soon. This is not sustainable for me.

Another says:

This shutdown is the worst one that I have been involved with since joining the Federal Government decades ago. Earlier this week, I went to my credit union to take out a personal loan to pay my bills. It is the first time ever in my life I have had to do that.

Another says:

I work under a government contract, and I have just been informed that I cannot come back to work until this government shutdown is over. This is a terrible time of year for myself and my fellow coworkers to not know when we can continue our work, not that there is ever a good time for a shutdown.

Well, the good news is, I have a lot more stories like this, but I want to share some of the time with my colleagues, and I will get back to reading them more.

So I now yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD).

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, this week, we voted for the tenth time to end the shutdown. For people in the 14th District of Illinois, the effects of this Trump shutdown are real, and they are painful.

This weekend, I visited a family shelter for survivors of domestic violence that does incredible work serving my community. This shelter would like to expand to serve even more people, but funding uncertainty around reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act makes that impossible for them. Domestic violence survivors are casualties of this shutdown.

This weekend, I also met an entrepreneur who is working to open a pet care company with her husband. He even left his job so they can realize their dream, but they are currently waiting on a Small Business Administration loan they need to open their business. It is sitting on a furloughed worker's desk. Entrepreneurs are casualties of the shutdown.

This week, I met with air traffic controllers in my district, people who keep passengers and freight moving safely

through the skies. They are working 6-day weeks and about to miss a second paycheck. They told me they look after their colleagues by asking: How long do you have left?

How long do they have left before they miss a mortgage payment or a healthcare bill, or max out their credit cards?

These are hardworking, responsible people, many with at least 3 months' savings, but they are entering their second month without a paycheck. The financial and psychological stress of this shutdown is cruel, and, sadly, it won't be the only consequence.

The shutdown has closed the air traffic controller training academy, which will diminish the pipeline of people we need to keep air travel safe and efficient in the future. Our future is a casualty of the Trump shutdown.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope our Republican colleagues will join us in reopening the government. The alternative is too painful for too many.

Ms. PINGREE. I thank the gentlewoman very much for her thoughts.

I am now happy to yield to my friend from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Maine. This subject is so serious and so infuriating because it is absurd.

We have shut down our government—we are the only country in the world that does something like this—inflicting harm on our employees, on Americans, and on America.

I see we have the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER) in the Chamber. She talked about national security being placed at risk. The fact that we have done this to ourselves is really difficult, and I would say to the President, Madam Speaker, that it is time to reopen this government.

We have offered 11 versions of how to reopen the government. But I want to talk about some stories, because the psychological effect that the gentlewoman from Maine talked about really has an impact on these employees.

I want to talk about a young man who works for the National Park Service. He is in the natural resource technical division, so what he does is he goes to the national parks and deals with faults and different kinds of geological problems that may exist. They work throughout the year, but particularly at the time when their parks are not very crowded. This is something that is very important.

He has worked for the Park Service for 19 years, and then, all of a sudden, he believes that nobody saw this coming, and he is furloughed, with young children.

And he described it as this:

I don't know when we are going to get back to normal. Everything is on hold. It just sucks. The mental side is crushing. I am sad; I am angry; I am demoralized. And this sitting around, just twiddling your thumbs, hoping that the greatest Nation on Earth opens back up for business, eats away at my soul.

He has a brother-in-law who works for the Border Patrol. He is an EMT

and a field agent with four children. He is a first responder not getting paid.

□ 1730

And this gentleman, we ask him to provide border security, and he is not getting paid, and he is under the pressure of having a young family that needs these paychecks and needs stability and reliability.

We had folks from Fish and Wildlife that came in and talked to us, they deal with aquatic and invasive species, like the zebra mussel, which really can gum up water systems throughout the country.

There was a big conference between Canada and the western United States that got canceled when, in fact, we should be making sure these rivers and our waterways are in good shape. They are getting affected.

There are so many things. We talk about the front-facing individuals that talk to the public, the TSA, the FBI, those individuals, but we have so many other employees who provide service to each and every one of us that are either working without pay or have been furloughed without any end in sight.

This is no way to run a nation. We know that. The absurdity of all of this is really taking hold, and it is time for us to open this government. This can be resolved quickly, Mr. President. Let's just get this government open, and then let's sit down and negotiate all of this.

Ms. PINGREE. I thank the gentleman for taking the time to share those stories with us. It is so important that everybody understand the impact this is having in many areas that most people don't know anything about.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maine for organizing this.

Madam Speaker, right now, millions of Americans all across this country are struggling, and they are uncertain about the future because of a government shutdown.

Federal employees, government contractors and their families, they are all hurting. Small businesses, nonprofits, State and local governments, they are feeling the pain, and they know they cannot count on Congress and the Federal Government as a reliable partner.

So who is at fault for this irresponsible, negligent, and dangerous shutdown? President Trump and the Republicans.

They are demanding a wall, a wall the Republican majority refused to fund for 2 years, and they are willing to inflict pain on millions of Americans, damage our economy, and put our Nation at risk to get their way, all so the President can keep a campaign promise.

Mr. Trump and the Republicans in Congress have taken 800,000 Federal workers hostage, and for them to get back to work and get paid, the ransom demand is Trump's wall.

Last week, I met with over 40 Federal employees, air traffic controllers, TSA agents, prison guards, all forced to work without pay. I met with Federal workers from HUD, and the IRS, and the Agriculture Department, who are furloughed and without pay. They are struggling. They feel betrayed by their government. They feel betrayed by their President.

Tomorrow, these valued workers will miss their second paycheck. They are hurting. They feel desperate. Their families are hurting, and they feel afraid. They are being treated like pawns by this President, and it is just outright cruel.

House Democrats have passed appropriation bills 10 times to fund and immediately open the government, but Republicans keep voting "no."

It is time for Congress and Democrats to vote to open the government and to end this shutdown. Then we can negotiate the details of comprehensive border security and immigration reform with the government open.

Every Federal worker, on the job or at home, I want you to know, you are valued for your service and your contribution to the safety and security and to the success of our Nation. You deserve to be treated with respect. You deserve to get paid immediately.

And the one way that we can collectively thank them for their service is to open the government now.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for sharing those stories.

I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I want to talk about Tom, who is a 32-year Federal employee and works as an agricultural statistician. He calculates how many cattle are in the western United States and how many acres of hay and crop that we have.

This is his fourth government shutdown. He loves his job and his work. He loves serving our country. But he feels like these political games have become an insult, and he is tired of being used as a pawn.

I have many more stories, but I see that the gentleman from Maryland is ready to go and I yield back to the gentlewoman from Maine so that she can yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank everyone here tonight for providing the diversity of stories that are really coming from States across the country which we all represent. And I know it is just a small bit of what we are all hearing every day in our offices.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I thank Ms. PINGREE and Mr. PERLMUTTER for their leadership.

I welcome all questions from you guys and any other colleagues here, and from any Republicans present. Anybody who wants to pose a question to me, I am all for it.

Madam Speaker, Lara Trump, who is President Trump's daughter-in-law and

re-election campaign adviser, recently had a message for the furloughed workers and people working without pay. It will all be worth it, she assures us. "Listen, it's not fair to you, and we all get that; but this is so much bigger than any one person," she said in an interview with "Bold TV". "It is a little bit of pain, but it's going to be for the future of our country."

No, this is not a little bit of pain. A little bit of pain is losing your earring at the White House Christmas party. That is a little bit of pain.

This is a lot of pain that the American people are experiencing right now. It is day 34, and tens of thousands of my constituents are suffering because of the shutdown. Military veteran air traffic controllers in Frederick County are being forced to work with no pay, and having to borrow money from their kids' 529 college accounts, with a 10 percent penalty, in order to put food on the table and to pay their mortgage.

FDA workers living in Bethesda sent home from the job with no pay, when they are supposed to be keeping our food supply safe from E. coli, salmonella and insect infestation.

Dozens of scientists, researchers, secretaries, technicians, park rangers, IT workers, all thrust into a nightmare of closed offices, closed daycare, no gross pay, no net pay, and a suffering economy.

There are thousands of private contract employees in my district, Madam Speaker, who have not earned a dollar in a month, and they are never going to get repaid for it.

There are Uber drivers telling me they are making one-third of what they usually make because our regional economy is depressed in Maryland, Virginia, and D.C., because of the government shutdown. And we know that that is symptomatic of what is going on across the country, because more than 80 percent of Federal workers don't live in the national capital region.

One of my constituents has been a Federal employee for 27 years, first in the Interior Department, and then in the National Park Service, who says: "This is the first time that I've had to question whether I made the right choice in public service, and the first time I've had to reach into my retirement funds to make sure that my wife and I can pay our bills as they come due this week and next."

He describes fellow Park Service employees living lives of quiet desperation. And of course they would be, because they are being maligned and typecast by the President of the United States, who derides all of the Federal workers as Democrats. He says they're all Democrats.

Well, first of all, it is not true. But what difference does it make? They are Americans.

We used to have Presidents of the United States who stood with all Americans, not with those from a particular political party, not just with

those who agreed with the President or showed blind loyalty to the President. We used to have Presidents who were loyal to the American people and to our Constitution.

"All are suffering," my constituent writes, "mostly silently, not looking for pity, but just for Congress and the White House to do their job."

Now, we might think this shutdown is some kind of freak outburst by an admittedly erratic and impetuous President. But, Madam Speaker, I represent tens of thousands of Federal workers, and I am afraid that there is a method to this madness, and I know what it is; because I was there in January 2017 when the President issued an executive order freezing all Federal hiring, demoralizing, and even crippling agencies throughout our government.

I was there when they adopted, in January of 2017, the Holman Rule, giving Congress the power to reduce Federal workers' salaries, and even abolish their positions, simply by slipping riders into appropriations bills.

I watched them try to ban the use of the words "climate change" by Federal scientists in official documents. And I saw them propose hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Federal workers' wages and health benefits.

I saw the President, in September of last year, announce his decision to rescind modest, across-the-board, statutory pay increases and locality pay increases of 1.9 percent for the Federal workforce. And I have watched them try to bust the Federal worker unions by making it easier to fire Federal employees and trying to undo the existing collective bargaining contracts, a series of moves that were fought by the AFGE and NTEU and were finally reversed in court.

Madam Speaker, the original political philosopher of this administration, Steve Bannon, told us very clearly what was the principal and overriding political aim of this administration when he essentially declared war on our government and its workforce.

He stated at the outset of the administration that the new administration is in an unending battle for a deconstruction of the administrative state. "Every day it is going to be a fight," he said. And by the administrative state, he means my constituents, who are working to protect our air, protect our water, protect our planet and the climate at the EPA, at NOAA, and throughout the Federal Government.

He means the civil servants at the Department of Justice who are prosecuting mobsters and white collar criminals; the IRS agents who are trying to catch tax scofflaws and collect money so we have a government.

He means the people at NOAA who are trying to save us from the horrors of ocean acidification, the collapse of the glaciers, and the cataclysmic weather events that have overtaken us in the age of global warming.

He means the hardworking scientists and researchers at the NIH who are working to cure colon cancer and breast cancer, cystic fibrosis, and multiple sclerosis, and even malignant narcissistic personality disorder.

Madam Speaker, does America recognize what is happening to us? We have a President who has essentially declared war on our own government, on our own civil servants. This is a complete betrayal of the oath of office. He is sworn to uphold and defend the law, not to frustrate and thwart it.

The first paragraph of the Constitution creates a covenant to form a more perfect union, but the President has given us the longest shutdown in American history. He is driving a wedge through the union.

To establish justice. But they have defunded the Department of Justice.

To ensure domestic tranquility, but the Department of Homeland Security is not being funded and our Border Patrol agents are being forced to work with no pay.

To provide for the common defense, but our Coast Guard officers have been held hostage, along with the rest of the Federal workforce.

To promote the general welfare, but 800,000 Federal workers are being forced to work with no pay, or sent home from jobs that the American people desperately want them to do.

And to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, but, instead, we are now threatening to bequeath to our children a dysfunctional government, degraded regulatory capacity to clean our air and water, a chaotic and unequal economy, and a comprehensive climate disaster.

And who wins? Who benefits? Who profits from it?

Well, we know it is not the American people. The overwhelming number of American people in every poll says open up the government right now. Put the Federal workers back to work.

And it is not the Federal workforce, which has been put through hell over the last month. It is not the business community, which is suffering. It is none of us who are benefiting, because the whole economy is hurting.

But Donald Trump has a profound admiration for autocrats and kleptocrats, tyrants and dictators all over the world. Putin in Russia, Orban in Hungary, Duterte in the Philippines, the homicidal Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman. All of these are the heroes of the President, and it must be a delicious sight for them to see as the President dismantles the government of our own country.

They don't shut down the government in Russia. They are not shutting down the government in Hungary. They are not shutting down the government in the Philippines, but he has shut down our own government.

Who wins? Who benefits from this outrageous and scandalous offense against America?

Well, it is not a partisan issue. I think the American people are increasingly unified every day against this horror.

And now we had the first great Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, who unified America by working to save the Union and defend the government.

And now we have got a Republican President who is driving a wedge through the Union, and has closed the government down. Will that be his legacy? Will this disgraceful offense against our Constitution and government be the legacy of this President? Or will, somehow, someone get to the President and tell him that our people are hurting? It is not a little bit of pain.

□ 1745

And I know they can't understand why Federal workers are going to food banks. Then they should come on out to the food banks. I invite them to come join me at the food banks in my district where I have been going. You will meet lots of Federal workers and their families there, because in this economy there are a lot of people who are living from paycheck to paycheck, and tomorrow, that is two paychecks that people have missed, and they have missed them in the course of not doing the jobs that America needs them to do.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Ms. PINGREE for yielding this time, and I just urge all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the President to please let America get back to work, and to open the government immediately.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland for his comments.

I know it is particularly challenging in a district where so many people are close to Washington and so many Federal employees have a multitude of challenges. So I appreciate the gentleman's good work and his thoughts.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), my friend and colleague.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with over 800,000 Federal workers and contractors who are dramatically impacted by the shameful and irresponsible government shutdown. I rise today to share the stories of those Federal workers in my district, Alabama's Seventh Congressional District.

This shutdown is impacting everyone. I had the pleasure, recently, of going through the Montgomery airport and the Birmingham airport in my district. It was Martin Luther King Day, and everybody was trying to be upbeat, but, you know, it is really hard to be upbeat when you miss a paycheck. It is hard to be upbeat when you have bills to pay and you don't know how you are going to make ends meet.

We celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday on Monday, and it was Dr.

King who said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Well, Madam Speaker, it is a threat to justice that people work without pay in this country, in America. It is an injustice that they are about to miss the second paycheck.

It is unacceptable that we are not doing our job so that the people who are working without pay can get paid. We have to do better. We must reopen government. Enough is truly enough.

Today, my staff delivered food to the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Aliceville, Alabama, in Pickens County, to the hundreds of workers who work there every day and who have not gotten paid in 35 days. They did so out of service.

But do you know what? We, out of obligation, must open up this government so that everyone who is working gets paid, all those who are furloughed can go back to work.

We know the importance of dignity of a job. These are hardworking Federal workers and contractors who deserve to get paid. Why are we holding them hostage? Why are their paychecks held hostage all for a wall?

I want to be clear, Madam Speaker: We Democrats believe in border security, but we want effective border security.

I do not believe in spending \$5.7 billion for a wall when people in my district, babies in my district, go to bed hungry, when there are people in my district who need basic water and sewer in Lowndes County and Pickens County and in Perry County, Alabama.

I will stand up and fight for all those in my district, and I stand in solidarity with my Federal workers and contractors. They deserve to get paid.

I had an opportunity to talk with a young TSA worker from Birmingham, Alabama, just on Tuesday. I pass through that airport once a week going to and fro to D.C.

This young worker, with a smile on her face, said: How are you this morning? Can I help you?

I said: How can I help you? I want you to know that we are working hard every day to open up government.

She said: I know that. I know that you are. I also know that you know that a wall will not make the difference.

You know, the sad irony is that so many of these Federal workers don't have savings. She told me that she was just happy to have a job with the Federal Government, to have the security of having a Federal job is what she said.

She also told me that right now things are okay because she has her mother to take care of her child. She can no longer afford to send her child to daycare and put gas in her car to drive to the Birmingham airport to work at 4 a.m., that first shift, but she does it. She does it as long as she can.

We have to stand on this floor and demand that we reopen government as long as we can, as long as they have

not gotten their paychecks. It is unfair. It is an injustice. It is an injustice.

So today, many of my congressional staff are with those correctional officers in Aliceville, Alabama.

We heard the story of Heather Bryant, who is struggling to pay for the gas she needs to drive the 30 minutes to work.

You see, in this small community of Aliceville, Alabama, the Federal women's correctional facility is the major employer. It is the major employer in that city, in that county.

I want you to know that because, in the 35 days that these corrections officers, parole officers, prison workers have gone without pay, we have seen restaurants close. We have seen convenience stores reduce hours in that community. Indeed, in order for us to provide meals today, we had to reopen that Meat and Three diner in order to feed these workers today.

This is unacceptable because it is not just the Federal workers who are impacted; it is the collateral damage that is done to the communities around this country. Store owners, restaurant owners who depend upon those workers for their livelihoods are affected.

We must do something now. It is unfair for us to ask those folks who are furloughed to come back to work and not get paid. It is unfair and unjust for us to ask Federal workers who are working hard every day in our airports, in our prison systems all across this Nation to work without pay.

But as Martin Luther King also said: "The time is always right to do what is right."

What is right, Madam Speaker, is to reopen government now. We must stand with these Federal workers. We must unabashedly demand that they get paid, and we must seek ways to work across the aisle to get government open.

But they have to also offer an olive branch. This President hasn't done that. Instead, he has put his interests over the American people's interests.

Enough is enough. We must reopen government and let our Federal workers, our contractors, know that we stand in solidarity with them.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank Ms. SEWELL from Alabama for being here tonight.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I really appreciate the opportunity to come down and talk.

Our colleague from Alabama was talking about Martin Luther King, who also talked about the urgency of now. If there is a time for urgency, it is now to end the shutdown and pay the workers.

He also talked about and warned about that, if you wait too long, it can be too late. So this is the time to spare what is a growing disaster for all Americans from happening.

Wilbur Ross, our Commerce Secretary, said that he doesn't quite understand why these furloughed and unpaid workers might have to go to a food bank. He doesn't understand.

That is exemplary of the level at which this administration is completely tone-deaf and out of touch, that they don't understand how people—the beginning salary for a TSA worker at the airport is \$28,000, and sometimes it goes up to maybe \$43,000. Tomorrow will be the second paycheck that they don't get.

So a number of us in Chicago had a roundtable that included eight Members of the House of Representatives, Democrats, and Senator DURBIN. Madam Speaker right now in the chair was at that roundtable. We heard from 18 different workers from different agencies talking.

Wilbur Ross ought to talk to Florence, who is helping people get food stamps and found herself having to apply for food stamps, for the SNAP program. She waited 3 hours at a food bank. Why? Because the lines are growing and growing and growing of people who, yes, need to get food on their tables and can't afford to do it.

Shame on Secretary Ross for not understanding what is going on out there.

We are hearing of people giving blood and plasma in order to have a few dollars to put food on the table. We are hearing about people running out of gas money, and that means that they can't get to work. This is money that comes out of their pocket while they are not getting paychecks.

Madam Speaker, to MITCH MCCONNELL, who doesn't want to call bills that would actually get the government going, I say: Shame on you. Shame on you, Wilbur Ross. Shame on this administration. This is a crisis. This is a disaster that you are creating. You can end it.

So the demand is clear: End the shutdown; pay the workers.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman so much for sharing that and for hosting a roundtable in her district.

Madam Speaker, I think every time we have a chance to have people gather to talk about this, at least they know we are listening to them, even if we haven't fixed the problem.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO).

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maine for hosting this.

First, I want to start by reading a letter from one of my constituents, Douglas Lowe, who is a professional aviation safety specialist in my district.

"Dear Representative DARREN SOTO, I am writing you with a heavy heart and much stress as I live through this government shutdown. It has been the longest we have ever faced, and as the days continue, I am finding myself more and more weakened by the situation.

"I am the president for the Florida Chapter of Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, PASS. We represent the men and women that make aviation across our Nation function in every aspect, from the aviation safety inspectors, to people like myself who maintain complex equipment that makes air traffic control possible, as well as a multitude of support staff that deals with logistics and contracts.

"The main reason I am writing you is to talk about the human factor. We need to find a resolution. There must be an end to this shutdown. Real people are suffering. Many coworkers of mine across the Nation, people I represent have come to me with hardships. I personally have dealt with two individuals already who have had to resign their positions and move on with life.

"We are going on day 34 now with no end in sight. Men and women like myself have still been at work. Each day makes that endeavor a little harder. We struggle with when and how do we keep coming to work and support the system when we can no longer afford gas. I personally have had to make some sacrifices already. Friday the 25th is my daughter's 18th birthday. I have asked my daughter to please forgive me, but we are not buying her anything right now because we need to budget and ensure we have money for bills and food.

"Also, I take care of my mother who has schizophrenia. I have been relying 100 percent this past month on her nurse to hold everything together because I cannot get over to see her. The amount of stress and anxiety surrounding these events is enormous. I cannot ask enough that every Member of Congress please think about those of us caught in the middle of this fight.

"Please consider our hardships and find some common ground; find a road forward. I still have faith in you, and we are carrying the country on our backs, but I do not know how much longer we can endure.

"I am a marine and a leader, so I show a smile and I keep moving forward, but I have already seen the heartache and turmoil others have displayed, people crying, not knowing how to make ends meet, professionals applying for food stamps and aid while still being required to put in a 40-hour workweek."

□ 1800

"This list goes on and on, but I believe the most disturbing fact is that this is happening to people in the United States of America. People are being asked and forced to work for free, threatened to completely lose their livelihood if they do not show up. This is something that I would expect from" a country that is developing. I won't use the exact words he used.

"My fear is someone is going to be so stressed that they miss a task. They are going to be so fatigued that they make a mistake, and, with the jobs that we do, that mistake could lead to

the lives of thousands being lost. Aviation safety is on the line, and each day, each hour, each minute that we stay shut down, more risk is injected into our Nation's aviation system.

"Please, I beg you to reopen the government before something bad happens. I continue to come to work because I think of the children that may be flying into Orlando on a Make-A-Wish Foundation flight. That child may have cancer and be on their way to Disney for what may be the last days of their lives. I come to work each day without pay to make sure that those children land safely. But as the weeks turn into months for this shutdown, I am fearful that even I will have a breaking point.

"Sincerely, Douglas Lowe, Professional Aviation Safety Specialists."

Now, I want to talk a little bit about compromise throughout American history. There have been some great American compromises that we have seen in this Nation.

Starting at the very founding of our Republic, in 1787, after we had to start working on the Constitution, Connecticut delegates Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth drafted the Great Compromise, a plan for congressional representation. Without this, there likely never would have been a Constitution.

Many more compromises have followed in political history, but imagine what small States would face, and large States would face, if they didn't have representation in the Senate and in the House.

Then there was the Compromise of 1790 that was made famous by the now-popular "Hamilton" musical. It was the compromise by Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson with James Madison, where Hamilton won the decision for the national government to take over, pay the debt, and create a banking system, while Jefferson Madison obtained a national capital, in the District of Columbia that we stand in right now, for the South. That was described as "the room where it happens," and I feel like we need another room where it happens today.

But compromises aren't always great in American history. In the 19th century, in particular, we had many examples. It was a dark time, for trying to compromise on such moral crusades as slavery and the Civil War. But I will mention one of them.

In 1820, there was the Missouri Compromise, legislation that provided admission of the gentleman's State, Maine, a Free State, along with Missouri, that, unfortunately, came in as a slave State, thus maintaining the balance of power between the North and the South in the United States.

One of the things I struggle with right now is: What time are we in? Is this a time where we need to compromise, and it will turn out to be one of those terrible ones that America will look back on, like that one? Or will it be one of the ones that helped forge ahead the Republic stronger than ever?

In the 20th century, compromise fared far better in American politics. We saw, in 1917, the United States came together to enter World War I, even though we were still emerging as a world power ourselves. We saved our allies from destruction, turned the tide of the war, and eventually emerged as a major power.

Everything changed when we saw the New Deal happen. Mostly Democrats, with some Republicans, not enough of them, came together to help make sure that we would have major programs to help put Americans back to work after we had the stock market crash.

But it was on December 7, 1941, a day that would live in infamy when Pearl Harbor was bombed, that Democrats and Republicans came together to join in a fight against Nazi Germany and the Japanese empire, to literally rewrite the rules of the world order that we now live in today. We just, in fact, reaffirmed this with a vote the other day, affirming our support for NATO.

Compromise got even better as we got into the sixties. In 1964, one of the first civil rights bills, proposed by congressional Democrats in the North and opposed by Republican Senators, led to one of the longest filibusters in Senate history. Eventually, Majority Leader Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, I believe, reached out to his Republican counterpart, Senator Everett Dirksen, to put an end to the debate, and the bill passed 9 days later.

In 1977, we saw, finally, more regulations and more teeth in the law to protect folks who were going hungry with the Food Stamp Act. It was Republican Bob Dole at the time—can you imagine that later on?—along with Democratic Senator George McGovern who joined forces to support a bipartisan compromise back in 1987.

In 1986—we have heard so much about the eighties—President Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill were able to get together to come up with major compromises. One was to save Social Security for a future generation, in 1983 to 1986. Another in 1986 was a tax reform bill that eventually came to a compromise.

This leads me to probably the most relevant one for what we have today, which is, in 2013, when a bipartisan immigration bill passed the Senate with 68 votes. It had comprehensive immigration reform and included robust border security.

So the big question that each Member will have to ask in the Congress, in the House, in the Senate, and the President as well, is: What are we willing to do to rise together? What sacrifices are we willing to make? What compromises are we willing to wage? What interests are we going to advance to come together to put an end to the longest shutdown in American history?

I can assure you, it is not going to be easy. But I know that, if we all work together, we can do it.

There is one thing in common with all these compromises: none of them

required a government shutdown, not a single one. We had some filibusters in there, but not one of these major compromises in American history started by a shutdown.

I think the first thing that we need to do is reopen the government, not hold our Federal workers hostage over what needs to be a grand compromise on policy, on immigration, on border security.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maine for allowing me to have a few moments to talk about how important it is, this moment in time, and how every Member needs to step up for the American people to end this shutdown now.

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for reminding us of some important compromises. Some I liked, some I didn't. But were it not for the Missouri Compromise, we wouldn't have Maine, so I am glad about that one anyway.

Also, as you said, we can compromise without holding hostage all of these workers we have been talking about tonight, without shutting down the government, and without shaking up people's lives. This is our challenge, to work it out as Members of Congress, as members of the executive branch. We can't ask our hardworking Federal employees to bear the brunt of all this.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK), who is also the vice chair of our Caucus. I thank her for being here tonight and for fitting us into her busy schedule.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for holding this important Special Order hour. It is so important that we tell the stories of the very real impact of this shutdown, and I appreciate her giving us that opportunity.

I do want to share some of the stories from my district.

We recently heard from Emily, who is a TSA agent at Logan Airport and a single mom of three. She hasn't received her paycheck. She won't be getting one tomorrow and is worried about falling behind on rent and childcare payments. She has to stay current with childcare or she loses her children's spots. She said: "I don't know how I'm going to make this work. If I don't get paid, how can I afford to send my children to daycare?" She has \$400 left in her bank account.

Then there is Donna from Revere. She has been employed at her job for the last 22 years but doesn't know where her next meal will come from without a paycheck to rely on. Donna said: "I have to choose between buying food or paying a bill."

We received a call from a retired Federal employee in Natick. She lives in affordable housing and is required to prove her income to renew her lease. She cannot obtain a statement from OPM regarding her pension because they are closed, jeopardizing her living situation.

Sandy called us. She owns a startup in Cambridge that almost exclusively contracts with DOD and DHS. This is a small business, and they are struggling to keep up with payroll as the checks stopped coming. She said: "We have about a week and a half of payroll left."

David from Ashland is an Active Duty Coast Guard member stationed in Boston. I want to note that the community has come together to open a food bank for our Coast Guard members and their families. He doesn't know how he and his family are going to continue to pay their bills.

The Coast Guard, certainly for coastal States and for our national security, plays a critical role, not only in search and rescue, and protection from terrorism, but also in drug interdiction. The fact that we are asking Coast Guard members, who serve their country proudly and with great patriotism, to work without pay is a national shame.

Susan from Belmont receives a housing subsidy through HUD, and if the shutdown continues, she is afraid she could face the possibility of eviction.

We have heard from Amanda in Walham. Amanda is an Indian citizen who has resided with legal status in the U.S. for over 12 years, working for a childcare provider. She, her husband, and young son traveled to India in November to visit with family. At that time, they went to the U.S. consulate to get their visas stamped. Her husband's visa was issued right away, but Amanda's was subject to further review. Having not received her visa, she remains in India, separated from her son and husband. The shutdown has delayed this processing further and has prolonged the separation, which is a significant hardship on this family.

These are just a few of the stories that we have heard about what is the real impact of this shutdown.

It is long past time that we open government. We can negotiate on what real border security looks like, but it shouldn't be done at the expense of the security of these families and of our national security as well.

□ 1815

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Massachusetts for sharing those stories, which we are hearing throughout New England, and are so challenging and meaningful to all of us.

We have heard tonight from all regions of the country: north, south, east, and west, and so many of the stories are the same. We heard from families affected by the fact that our Coast Guard personnel are not being paid, the only branch of the military that doesn't get paid.

This is a hardship not only on them, but on their families as well who are home trying to make ends meet when they are off deployed; the TSA and the FAA, which we depend on every single day in our airports across the country

for our safety, for our security; people who work in the Federal courts; people who are not working, but are government employees. They are not essential, so they are furloughed, but they can't go out and get another job in the middle of all of this. They just have to wait until it is all over to collect that back pay.

There are so many contractors I hear from who can't continue with their contracts, because maybe they work with the Coast Guard or other Federal agencies, and they can't keep the funding going, and they can't give any certainty to when jobs will be completed or to their own employees.

I have a couple of minutes left and I am going to read a long story, but it might just take up exactly the right amount of time.

We talk so much about all of the employees, but there are so many others who are impacted by this, and, particularly, in the agriculture sector in Maine. We are very proud of our farmers. We are very proud of seeing new, young farmers getting into the business, of farms being revived and finding new markets.

This was a story from the Grace Pond Farm in Thomaston. They shared their story of how the USDA shutdown has impacted them. They said: "We are often a little removed from the issues affecting others. We can sigh and rejoice, cry and shake our fists at the air with just a little bit of safe distance from way up here; but not this time. This shutdown affects everyone and that everyone includes us.

"We have planned, schemed and dreamed our way onto this historic farm property in Thomaston. Gregg and I have spent countless late nights, after catching chickens and milking cows, staring at screens and numbers, and putting together business plans and spreadsheets to grow sustainably.

"Our goal—to be able to just milk cows, grow chickens and turkeys, feed our kids and neighbors, and drive a car that runs. Gregg grew up learning how to enjoy dark mornings, working on a dairy farm in rural Pennsylvania. I grew up in central Maine, spending mornings waiting for the Skehan's dairy truck and learning how to beat my brother to the cream on top of that glass bottle.

"We want to ensure that both of these experiences are available to our kids, and to everyone in Maine, for years to come.

"Our farm is financed the old-fashioned way—on a tightrope. We operate on a faith-based budget, and that keeps things exciting. The FSA and the USDA rural development loans are valuable resources for poor folks that want to work hard and eat well—and we make good use of them.

"About a year ago, with a shifting dairy market impacting our current situation, we poured ourselves into the process of financing the new farm we'd found to fit our needs.

"Utilizing a community lender, we managed to secure that property, and

relying on our faith-based budget, we went for it. Thanks to CEI for taking that chance on us. We also began the laborious process of financing the dairy infrastructure at the new property using the FSA as our security lender, because that's what they do for us.

"This is all contingent on our selling the 'old' farm property—we cannot in any way carry two farms. After gratefully securing a buyer for the 'old' farm, we were moments away from closing when the government was shut down. Just like that, we lost access to our mortgage holder and all of the necessary documentation and signatures that they alone can provide.

"Not only that, we were just a few weeks away from the deadline for our Maine DACF-based dairy loan, and found ourselves suddenly without the proof of security necessary. No skin in the game equals no dairy loan.

"We are now weeks past our closing. We continue to accrue heating bills, taxes, and mortgage interest on the 'old' farm property, while we pay all of the same on the 'new' one. We had to scramble to find another bridge loan for the dairy infrastructure, and due to the lender being anyone but the USDA, the interest rate is more than 5 percentage points higher—this translates to an annual number that made our 'numbers guy' take a few breaths before commenting when he heard the news. We are thousands of dollars into this shutdown now.

"We operate on razor-thin margins. We are not alone. The companies that sell us grain, and chicks, and poults, are all actual people, employing other actual people, all operating on a faith-based budget, trying to preserve a way of life that we believe has value and merit. We need an end to the shutdown before we have to shut down and the way life should be is that much more lost to us all."

Madam Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for being here tonight and thank everyone who shared their stories and allowed us to let you in on a little bit of how this tragedy proceeds. I encourage a negotiation and a settlement.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND STATUS OF WALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. UNDERWOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the current government shutdown and the status of the government wall.

It is kind of a frustrating issue to address, because there is so much misin-

formation out there. The first thing I will address is the unpaid employees. We can pay the unpaid employees, particularly the employees who are working, if we would pass a bill now. We do not have to end this whole thing.

There is a wonderful bill, H.R. 271, introduced by Congressman BROOKS—I am a cosponsor—that will immediately pay all of the current, working Federal employees.

I do not have the power to put that bill on the floor, because I am just a regular Congressman from Wisconsin. But the majority leader, if you see him, could put that bill on the floor any time. And if the real concern here is for the Federal employees who work in our airports, who work in the Coast Guard, who work in our prisons—many of whom I know and are great people—if these people really cared about them, that bill would be on the floor next Tuesday and winging its way to President Trump's desk by this time next week.

It is a mystery to me why, when so many politicians purport to care about the Federal employees, they will not bring forth this bill to pay them without having the whole issue solved.

The next issue I am going to address is these people who say President Trump cannot compromise. I don't know whether they haven't been paying attention the last 2 years, or whether they just love to make things up.

For the public to understand, under normal circumstances if we are going to build a wall, the wall is in what we call an appropriation bill, or what people back home would refer to as a budget. President Trump ran on the wall, and the wall is necessary, and we will talk about that in a second. Nevertheless, President Trump would have wanted funding for this wall in some budget.

For his first 2 years, President Trump was sent budgets by Congress, or spending bills by Congress, that did not contain a wall. That was frustrating to him, but because he did not want to shut down the government, and did not want to penalize the government employees, President Trump, particularly, with a big omnibus bill about a year ago, signed big spending bills without a wall because he compromised.

You will recall that originally people talked about this wall being \$20 billion. President Trump is now asking for \$5.7 billion. In the last week, I have taken time to meet with the former head of the Border Patrol. I have been on the Arizona border, and it disappoints the experts in the field, the people on the border themselves, that Donald Trump has compromised so much as to want only funding for a fraction of the wall.

So I would say, coming down from \$20 billion to \$5.7 billion is a big compromise. I would say twice signing entire appropriations for his first 2 years in office without the wall, is a big compromise by President Trump.