

# THE CHILDREN'S BUDGET COALITION

## INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

The Children's Budget Coalition is comprised of 75 child-focused organizations who collectively are dedicated to ensuring that our nation's leaders prioritize children in the federal budget process. The ongoing partial government shutdown represents a major threat to the economic security, health, and wellbeing of low-income children and families who participate in vital government programs and services. As such, we are writing to urge you to restore a regular budget process and facilitate the re-opening of the government by bringing the remaining House-passed FY 2019 appropriations bills up for consideration in the Senate.

The arbitrary nature of the current shutdown—where portions of the government with bicameral support remain unfunded and held hostage during ongoing negotiations related to Homeland security—significantly expands the scope and severity of the shutdown's impact, resulting in an actual crisis in the lives of hard-working American families with children. Denying pay to some 800,000 federal workers creates a set of impossible choices, especially for families with children. For instance, many federal workers must continue paying for childcare that they cannot even utilize until the government reopens.<sup>1</sup> Nor are these workers and their families the only victims of this shutdown. Tribal nations are scrambling to keep health clinics and food pantries open and clear roads buried under snow.<sup>2</sup> Roughly 70,000 low-income households participating in rental assistance programs must live in fear and uncertainty because the Department of Housing and Urban Development has not renewed 1,100 affordable housing contracts and is instead asking landlords to dip into reserve funds.<sup>3</sup> The Food and Drug Administration has only just now resumed "high-risk" food inspections and is delaying other routine inspections in order to preserve carry-over funding—which can only last another five weeks.<sup>4</sup> In addition, federally-funded domestic violence programs may begin scaling back services if there is no breakthrough in the FY2019 funding negotiations in the very near future.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://talkpoverty.org/2019/01/08/shutdown-parents-child-care-pay/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/01/us/native-american-government-shutdown.html?module=inline>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/because-shutdown-more-1-000-affordable-housing-contracts-have-expired-n955971>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/health/shutdown-fda-food-safety.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://broadly.vice.com/en\\_us/article/4399e3/domestic-violence-shelters-in-a-state-of-uncertainty-as-shutdown-continues](https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/4399e3/domestic-violence-shelters-in-a-state-of-uncertainty-as-shutdown-continues)

Meanwhile, the Administration’s contingency plans to provide low-income families with uninterrupted access to food assistance through February and move forward with a January 28 opening day for tax season—vital supports that keep millions of children from falling into poverty each year—are insufficient in the long term, administratively burdensome, and quite possibly unworkable. There already exists a legal challenge to calling a significant number of the furloughed IRS employees back to work without pay. The ability of families to meet their basic needs and plan for the future should not be held hostage in a fight over the President’s border wall.

Not only does prolonging the government shutdown harm the agencies awaiting their FY 2019 funding, it hampers the regular order and good faith needed to initiate timely negotiations around 302(a) allocations for FY 2020. Thus, we ask you to lead the way in reopening the government by allowing votes on the Senate-drafted, full-year funding bills that have passed the House, putting hundreds of thousands of federal employees back to work providing critical services to working families and children across the nation.

Signed,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Psychological Association  
Bread for the World  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Child Care Aware of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children’s Aid  
Children's Health Fund  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Early Care and Education Consortium  
Family Focused Treatment Association  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Futures Without Violence  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
MomsRising  
Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse  
National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement  
National Center for Healthy Housing  
National Education Association  
National Network for Youth  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Respite Coalition  
Parents Anonymous Inc  
Partnership for America's Children  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Save the Children Action Network  
SchoolHouse Connection  
Voices for Progress