September 12, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Mr. Speaker,

As Freshman Members of Congress, each of us is focused on delivering results for our communities and the American people – not being consumed by dysfunction and gridlock. It is our duty to make sure that our government continues to operate and that the services our constituents rely on aren’t paralyzed in a partisan shutdown or held hostage. As we approach the September 30th government funding deadline, we call on you to avoid a shutdown by passing responsible bipartisan funding bills, without extremist partisan poison pills, or devastating cuts to critical services. Holding the American people hostage with the threat of a government shutdown is irresponsible and antithetical to our oath as Representatives. In an equally divided chamber, the Senate Appropriations Committee demonstrated what compromise and responsible governance looks like having passed all 12 of its funding bills with strong support from both parties. As Freshman Democrats, we want to make it clear that spending legislation must be free of poison pill riders and cannot subjugate the American people to unacceptable cuts that would jeopardize the health, safety, and stability of millions of American families.

If your conference forces a shutdown by refusing to pass bipartisan legislation which can be enacted into law, every American family’s pocketbook will be impacted. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the partial 2018-2019 shutdown reduced Gross Domestic Product by a total of $11 billion1, while Moody’s Analytics and JP Morgan Chase estimated that the full 2013 shutdown reduced GDP growth by about $20 billion2. Furthermore, the 2013 shutdown led to 120,000 fewer private sector jobs, demonstrating how the effects of a shutdown extend beyond the public sector3. Moody’s Analytics estimated that the 2018-2019 shutdown delayed over $2 billion in loans to small businesses4. These economic disruptions will cost jobs, and will hurt the bottom line for businesses and families in every community in America.

---

Critical services for our veterans and seniors, lifesaving health and safety inspections, and Federal Aviation Administration operations, are just some essential functions that would be disrupted. Our remarkable National Parks would struggle to maintain visitor services and could shut down altogether. Loans to small business owners through the Small Business Administration would be halted, imposing economic hardship on millions of small business owners and their employees. IRS loan approvals and social security number verifications necessary for mortgages could likely be delayed, and SNAP food benefits for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our country would be threatened. SNAP benefit processing times will slow and stores who aren’t able to renew their Electronic Benefit Transfer card licenses will stop accepting SNAP benefits. In 2013, the Environmental Protection Agency halted site inspections for 1,200 different sites that included hazardous waste, drinking water, and chemical facilities, and the Food and Drug Administration delayed almost 900 inspections.

Finally, and most immediately, over two million federal employees and civil servants who dedicate their lives to serving the American people would be harmed if you refuse bring to the floor a deal which can pass both the House and Senate. A shutdown would lead to furloughs for many of these federal employees, the vast majority of whom live and work in each of our districts. The furloughs caused by the last three government shutdowns in 2013, 2018, and 2019 led to the equivalent of nearly 57,000 years in lost productivity and cost U.S. taxpayers approximately $4 billion in back pay. It is simply unacceptable for Congress to play political games with the livelihoods of both the government workers and their families who would be furloughed during the shutdown, as well as the essential employees who will be forced to continue working without pay.

Every day, as more roads are repaired and bridges are built, as manufacturing returns back to U.S. shores, and as inflation steadily decreases, our economy is reaping the benefits of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. A government shutdown threatens to reverse these hard-fought economic gains. Not only would a shutdown lower GDP growth, but it would also raise unemployment and drive up borrowing costs.

The only way to avoid these disruptions is for you to honor your agreements with President Biden and to pass bipartisan funding bills which are free from disastrous spending cuts, extremist demands, and which can pass the Senate before being signed into law.

The American people and our constituents deserve better than reckless gamesmanship. As Freshman Democrats, we urge you to avoid a shutdown or a partisan continuing resolution at all costs and stand ready to work in a bipartisan way consistent with the values and needs of the American people to keep our government working.

---

6 IBID
Sincerely,

Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress

Becca Balint  
Member of Congress

Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress

Yadira Caraveo, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Greg Casar  
Member of Congress

Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress

Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress

Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress

Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress

Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress

Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress

Glenn Ivey  
Member of Congress

Jeff Jackson  
Member of Congress

Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress