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National Capital Region Senators Introduce Measure to Restore Federal Workers' Pay at the End of the Government Shutdown

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (Both D-Md.), and Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine (Both D-Va.) have introduced a bill, the "*Federal Employee Retroactive Pay Fairness Act*," that would guarantee that federal workers who were furloughed because of the lapse in federal funding or government shutdown would receive their full pay.

"Hardworking federal employees did not cause our fiscal crises nor did they contribute to the legislative gridlock, but once again they are being asked to pay the heaviest price toward a resolution. Federal workers have endured a three-year pay freeze and 'contributed' over \$90 billion to deficit reduction before sequestration actually cut their salaries. Now, upwards of 800,000 federal workers are being furloughed – again – and the rest of federal workforce is being compelled to work without knowing when and if they will get paid," said Senator Cardin. "It is our responsibility to assure these public servants, mostly middle class and struggling to get by like so many other Americans, will be made whole again when it finally ends. It is the right thing to do."

"Right now hundreds of thousands of hardworking Americans, including thousands of Marylanders are going without pay because House Republicans have decided to shutdown the government with their 'my way or the highway approach,'" Senator Mikulski said. "What they are doing is just plain dangerous. It's dangerous for our furloughed workers and their families and for our economy as a whole. I will continue working with Senator Cardin to assure our dedicated federal employees receive the pay they deserve."

"This irresponsible shutdown adds insult to injury for many of our federal workers, many of whom have already had to endure furloughs from the sequester. There are more than 150,000 civilian federal employees in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and financial well-being has become collateral damage simply because a handful of extreme politicians in the House refusal to compromise. That is why I strongly support this important piece of legislation," Senator Warner said.

"Through no fault of their own, over 150,000 federal workers in Virginia are facing a second round of furloughs today as a result of House Republicans' unwillingness to accept a spending bill compromise to fund the government," said Senator Kaine. "For an unspecified period of time, these public servants will be left wondering when they'll see their next paycheck. At a time when we should be doing everything we can to hold on to the talent of our federal workforce, the least we can do is guarantee that they're paid back when the government re-opens."

Additional Senate cosponsors of the provision include Senators Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Pat Leahy (D-Vt.), Tom Udall (NM), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii). The House version of the bill (H.R. 3223) is sponsored by Congressman Jim Moran (D-Va.), and has 32 cosponsors so far including Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Rob Wittman (R-Va.), John Sarbanes (D-Md.), Donna Edwards (D-Md.), Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), Scott Rigell (R-Va.), and John Delaney (D-Md.).

The Congressional Research Service has reported, in "historical practice", federal workers who have been furloughed as a result of a shutdown have received their pay retroactively "as a result of legislation to that effect." The language in this bill is the language used to provide pay retroactively to workers furloughed in the Newt Gingrich-led shutdowns in 1995 and 1996; that language was contained as part of section 124 of P.L. 104-56 (109 STAT. 553).

The full text of the bill follows:

To provide for the compensation of furloughed Federal employees.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Federal Employee Retroactive Pay Fairness Act".

SEC. 2. COMPENSATION FOR FURLOUGHED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

Federal employees furloughed as a result of any lapse in appropriations which begins on or about October 1, 2013, shall be compensated at their standard rate of compensation, for the period of such lapse in appropriations, as soon as practicable after such lapse in appropriations ends.

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