



February 13, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

As President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I have the honor of leading a union that represents over 25,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers and trade enforcement specialists stationed at 329 land, sea and air ports of entry (POEs) across the United States. I am writing to urge you to pass a full year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security that the President will sign by February 27 when the short term funding bill expires. If Congress does not act by that date, funding for the Department will lapse and it will be forced into a shutdown.

Even though 85 percent of the Department's employees will continue to work to protect the homeland because their jobs are deemed "necessary for the safety of human life or protection of property", they will not be paid for their work until the political standoff is resolved. This will be the second shutdown for DHS employees in less than two years and we know from the prior shutdown that working without pay places an extreme burden on DHS employees and their families.

No one wins if this political standoff continues. The American people do not win if the Department of Homeland Security is shut down, even if its employees continue to work. At CBP, our training and the training of new hires will be suspended. New CBP Officer hires won't be added to the workforce, exacerbating ongoing staffing shortages at the ports of entry and increasing wait times for incoming foreign trade and travelers.

Planning, research and development activities will be suspended undermining technological targeting programs necessary for the performance of our jobs. Basic maintenance and updates will be delayed and, even though public websites will be accessible, they will not be maintained or updated. Employees who continue to work during a shutdown will be working without pay even though their family's financial obligations continue. And employees who are furloughed may ultimately lose pay they need and are counting on.

In contrast, a full year FY 2015 DHS appropriations bill would allow DHS to carry out its critical mission with transparent and explicit direction from Congress. DHS would be able to hire staff and initiate new projects to ensure our national security within the parameters laid out in enacted legislation. For these reasons, I urge you to end this funding impasse and enact legislation to fully fund DHS for the remainder of fiscal year 2015 before short-term funding lapses on February 27.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen M. Kelley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Colleen" being the most prominent.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President