



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Andrew Garbarino
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union, the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our appreciation for holding this timely and important hearing. The ongoing and unnecessary shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is having a real and noticeable impact on the general public and our economy. We strongly urge you to find a path through this impasse and work on a bipartisan basis to permanently end the possibility of future government shutdowns.

As you are aware, DHS's multiweek shutdown is dealing a significant hit to the American economy, with an estimated \$2.5 billion in lost output—and growing by the day. At a micro level, thousands of workers are working without pay, travelers are experiencing hours-long lines at airports, and there is a growing public perception that Congress cannot function. This comes at a time when Americans are still feeling the repercussions of the 2025 shutdown—the longest on record—which cost our economy over \$13 billion in lost output.

Unfortunately, Washington's budget process is fundamentally broken and invites this level of dysfunction. It has become too common for Congress to avoid the regular appropriations work and, instead, lurch from short-term patches to giant, last-minute omnibus packages that cost too much and offer lawmakers little time to review. When funding deadlines are missed, the government grinds to a halt—delaying passport applications, small business loans, energy permitting applications, among many other important functions. It also makes it less appealing for American citizens to want to join public service or stay in it, potentially risking a disruption to an experienced pipeline of workers.

Thankfully, there is a common sense solution to ensure Congress has tools to stop this nonsense for good. Last year, Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX) and Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) reintroduced the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act. The bill would keep the government operating temporarily at current funding levels while negotiations continue on longer-term deals. It would also bar members of Congress from spending taxpayer dollars on travel, taking recess, or considering most non-spending legislation until they finish the budget.

This legislation has historically received bipartisan support because it takes some of the politics out of the policymaking process. In practice, it would effectively trigger a 14-day continuing resolution every 14 days until Congress finally passes a spending vehicle. It keeps the appropriations process on track without the added backdrop of a shutdown.

While some may view government shutdowns as a path to smaller government or as leverage to get their preferred policy changes, shutdowns usually increase the size of government and stick taxpayers with the tab. Government shutdowns impose hidden opportunity costs, as federal agencies must prepare for potential shutdowns—redirecting staff time to contingency planning instead of normal responsibilities. In the case of DHS, there are an untold number of employees in the national security sector working without pay despite this period of elevated threats both domestically and abroad.

We've often noted that no one wins in a government shutdown, and the data continue to support this statement. Thank you again for highlighting the harmful effects of this unfortunate situation, particularly in the national security context, and we urge you to enact legislation that will implement an automatic continuing resolution to prevent future government shutdowns from ever happening again.

Thank you for your consideration of our views regarding this important issue and we look forward to working with you on a viable long-term solution.

Sincerely,

Thomas Aiello
Vice President of Federal Affairs