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Politicians talk about problems; We solve problems.



POSITION PAPER – HOLD CONGRESS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR FAILURE

The current federal government shutdown is the result of the failure of Congress to carry out one of its primary duties as enumerated in Article I of the U.S. Constitution. Congress holds the “Power of the Purse,” meaning that they – and they alone – are responsible for passing a budget before the beginning of any fiscal year. Since 1975, Congress has passed all the required appropriations measures by the October 1 deadline and prior to the beginning of the fiscal year only four times: in fiscal years 1977, 1989, 1995, and 1997. **ONLY FOUR TIMES IN THE PAST 50 YEARS!** If you or I failed to execute one of our primary tasks 46 out of 50 times, I guarantee we would be unemployed.

The use of Continuing Resolutions has become the norm in American politics. These temporary funding bills are designed to fund the government at the same level as the previous year, until a budget can be passed. They were never designed to allow for additional funding, nor were they designed to take the place of an appropriations bill. Yet, far too often, politicians use the threat of a government shutdown to extract additional funds for special interest projects through the use of these Continuing Resolutions – all while failing to execute one of their primary responsibilities. This inability to do their job has resulted in 14 previous government shutdowns – the last one lasting 34 days in December 2018!

The only ones that suffer from this total abdication of responsibility are WE THE PEOPLE. Federal employees, military members, and others stop receiving a paycheck during these shutdowns. States stop receiving federal funding for necessary programs for the underserved, causing severe hardships. In the past, these military members and most of these Civil Servants were given retroactive pay, once government funding was restored. However, things appear to be shaping up differently this time; and it appears that only the military and those Civil Servants deemed “Essential Personnel” will receive retroactive pay. The rest of the federal workforce may not receive any compensation. All this while Congress still draws their paychecks!

I say enough is enough! WE THE PEOPLE deserve a Congress that actually does what it is required to do. I have a solution to this continuing problem:

As Maryland’s next Governor, I will call for a Constitutional Convention of the States to address the issue of Congress’ failure to do their jobs. In addition to proposing Term Limits for Members of Congress (maximum of 16 years); something wanted by over 80% of Americans; I will propose a Constitutional Amendment that would dissolve Congress in the event that they were unable to pass a budget by the beginning of a fiscal year. The Governors of the States would then have 30 days to appoint new Members to represent the citizens of their respective States. There would be a prohibition against Governors appointing the same Members that have been removed or any member of those Members’ immediate family. These new Members would serve out the terms of the former Members and would be required to exclusively focus on passing a budget; to the exclusion of any other business. During this period of transition, the government would be automatically funded at 90% of the level of the previous fiscal year’s budget. This would ensure that our military and Civil Servants would continue to receive their pay while performing the functions of our government. The only ones who would suffer from Congress’ failure to perform their duties would be the Members of Congress themselves – as it should be.

Why should millions of hard-working Americans be made to suffer for the failure of 535 politicians? Perhaps if there are real consequences for their failures, we can finally get the government Americans deserve. It’s time we place the blame, and the responsibility, squarely where it belongs – the Members of Congress. WE THE PEOPLE deserve better.

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