

Employees forced to work without pay soon could run out of money to get to work

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- American Federation of Government Employees National President J. David Cox Sr. today sent a letter to President Obama, warning that federal employees are facing serious financial hardships as the government shutdown enters its third week.

About half a million federal employees remain locked out of their jobs due to the shutdown, while many more employees are required to report to work but aren't getting paid. As paychecks run out, they will face difficult decisions that could affect their continued employment, Cox said.

"Some tell us that by next week they will not have the money to afford the gasoline it will take to drive to work. Others tell us they will not be able to afford to leave their children in day care so they can come to work. Many will be forced to choose between feeding their families and paying for transportation to their jobs. Compounding the problem, some managers are threatening to fire or discipline employees who cannot come to work," Cox wrote.

Cox urged Obama to immediately advise managers to stop coercing and compelling employees to come to work without a paycheck when their children are sick, when they themselves are sick, or when they can no longer afford to pay for childcare, gasoline or public transportation fare to get to work.

Obama also should call upon the financial and business communities, utilities, oil companies and grocery stores, public transportation authorities and medical providers to allow employees to defer ordinary payments in light of the shutdown. In addition, Obama should consider declaring an emergency that would allow FEMA to make zero interest loans to any federal or D.C. worker who is not receiving his or her paycheck.

Cox also asked Obama to reject any proposals that would end the shutdown, increase the debt

ceiling or lower federal deficits by requiring federal employees to endure additional cuts to their pay or benefits.

"These proud, dedicated, hardworking Americans love the work they do for the American people. They have already had over \$122 billion taken from their pockets in the name of deficit reduction. Other Americans, particularly the wealthy and large corporations, have not been asked to contribute their fair share," Cox wrote. "We understand that one faction within one party hates government and hates government employees who serve the American people, but government employees cannot tolerate further cuts."

A copy of the letter can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1eh45WF> .

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 670,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia

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