

On eve of shutdown, Democrats plead for talks, while Trump, Republicans issue fascist attacks

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As the US government barreled toward a Tuesday midnight partial shutdown, Democrats pleaded for negotiations, while President Donald Trump and the Republicans issued fascistic attacks on Democratic leaders and threatened to use a shutdown to carry out mass permanent layoffs of federal workers.

The shutdown takes place in the midst of Trump's illegal deployment of troops to Portland and Memphis, in addition to Los Angeles and Washington D.C., and his speech to top military brass on Tuesday in which Trump said they would be called on to use lethal force against American citizens in cities across the country.

The Democrats and union leaders have avoided any mention of Trump's rush to dictatorship. They have proposed no action to oppose either the police-military occupations or the plans to fire tens of thousands of federal workers and gut basic social services and agencies that regulate corporations and enforce occupational safety, public health and environmental standards.

Under the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), tens of thousands of government workers have already been laid off, fired or bought out this year. As of April 2025, Challenger, Gray & Christmas estimated that DOGE actions were responsible for 280,253 job cuts involving federal workers and contractors, impacting 27 agencies.

Trump told reporters Tuesday morning that the government might fire "a lot" of federal workers in the event of a shutdown, and later he said a shutdown empowered the administration to cut social benefit programs. Well aware of mass popular opposition to the administration's attacks on democratic rights and social conditions being carried out on behalf of the

corporate oligarchy, Trump is seeking to put in place a presidential dictatorship to crush the inevitable eruption of class struggle.

He is also seeking to whip up fascistic sentiment to back his war on the working class. The Democrats are demanding that a continuing resolution to temporarily fund the government and avoid a shutdown include an extension of tax credits to subsidize Affordable Care Act (ACA) premiums beyond their end-of-year expiration. Trump and Republican leaders are falsely claiming this is a scheme to provide healthcare to "illegal aliens." This is in line with the administration's racist and fascist persecution of immigrants.

On Monday night, following a stalemated White House meeting on the looming shutdown with top Republican and Democratic congressional leaders, Trump posted on X and Truth Social an AI-generated video showing House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries wearing a sombrero and a cartoon mustache. Next to him was Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer talking at a podium, with mariachi music playing in the background.

The digitally altered Schumer said the Democrats had lost their voters "because of all of our woke, trans bulls***." He continued: "so we need new voters, and if we give all these illegal aliens free healthcare, we might be able to get them on our side so they can vote for us."

This is a version of the fascist and antisemitic Great Replacement Theory, which claims that Jews are conspiring to replace white Christian Americans with non-white immigrants.

Schumer's response to this fascist filth illustrates the

impotent and feckless posture of the Democratic Party. He posted his own social media comment, saying on X: “If you think your shutdown is a joke, it just proves what we all know: You can’t negotiate. You can only throw tantrums.”

The Democrats’ prostration is matched by that of the trade union bureaucracy, which opposes any action—mass protests, strikes—to fight Trump’s drive to dictatorship and the ruling class assault on the social conditions of the working class. On Monday, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) President Everett Kelley merely issued a statement urging bipartisan negotiations and compromise to avert a shutdown. AFGE, the largest federal workers’ union, covers 820,000 workers.

The Democrats are opposing the Republican bill to fund the government until November 21, in an attempt to create the illusion that they are resisting Trump’s attacks on the social rights of the working class. Last March, in the face of a similar funding deadline, Schumer reversed himself and voted to pass the Republicans’ continuing resolution (CR), keeping Trump’s fascistic government running. That capitulation further discredited the Democrats.

This time around they are opposing the Republican bill and presenting their own CR, which includes the restoration of \$800 billion in Medicaid cuts included in Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill enacted in July, plus an extension of Affordable Care Act tax credits. However, they have effectively dropped the demand to reverse the Medicaid cuts and are focusing entirely on the ACA subsidies.

On September 19, the House passed its funding measure in a 217-212 vote, with two Republicans voting against and one Democrat voting in favor. Later that day in the Senate, where 60 votes are required to surmount the filibuster rule and pass legislation, the House measure was voted down 48 to 44, with two Republicans voting “no” and one Democrat, John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, voting in favor. The Democratic counteroffer extending federal funding through October 31 failed with 47 in favor and 45 opposed.

On Tuesday, the Senate held pro forma votes on the Democrats’ CR and the House Republican CR, knowing in advance that both would fail. Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson has adjourned the House

until October 7, while Senate Majority Leader John Thune plans to keep the Senate in session during a shutdown. He plans to hold repeated votes on the House CR to keep the pressure on the Democrats.

Around 750,000 federal employees will be furloughed under a shutdown, according to an estimate by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released Tuesday. “Essential services,” including the US military, the intelligence agencies, the Department of Homeland Security, which includes immigration and border agents, and police forces like the FBI, will continue operating, although without pay. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and veterans’ benefits will continue, and mail delivery will not be disrupted.

There are indications the Democrats plan to end a shutdown by accepting a pledge by Republicans to negotiate on an extension of ACA tax credits after the government reopens, declaring that a “victory.” Last week the *Wall Street Journal* published an article under the headline: “Schumer Drives a Hard Bargain on Shutdown but Sees an Exit Ramp.” The *Journal* wrote: “In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* Schumer projected confidence that he has an exit strategy in the event of a shutdown.” The newspaper quoted Schumer as saying, “Democrats are going to say, very simply, ‘Just come and sit down and talk to us and negotiate agreements, and you can end the shutdown.’”



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