

Trump signs Democrat-backed spending package to end longest government shutdown in US history

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On Wednesday night, President Donald Trump signed the government funding bill that ends the longest shutdown in United States history. The deal moved forward only because eight members of the Senate Democratic caucus voted with Republicans on Sunday night. In the House on Wednesday, six Democrats also crossed the aisle and joined 216 Republicans to pass the bill by a margin of 222 to 209.

One of the six House Democrats who voted for the bill on Wednesday was Jared Golden of Maine, a former Marine who has announced he will not seek reelection. Golden is one of more than a dozen Democratic House members moved directly into Congress in 2018 from careers in the national security apparatus.

The most recent spending package appears to be nearly the same deal Republicans offered at the beginning of the shutdown. The legislation will fund the entire government through January 30, 2026 as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and Congress, through September 2026.

The bill also restores full funding for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. While the funding has been formally restored, food benefits have yet to arrive for millions of people.

While the shutdown has officially ended, its effects will still be felt by millions of workers and their families. In addition to the 42 million people who rely on SNAP in the US, some 670,000 federal employees were furloughed last month while another 730,000 workers, deemed "essential" by the government, were forced to labor without pay. This includes more than 13,000 air traffic controllers and about 50,000 workers in the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

While essential workers went unpaid, the repressive

apparatus of the state continued to operate normally. Federal immigration agents, who continued kidnapping and detaining workers throughout the shutdown, were fully funded and paid on time.

The shutdown is ending on Republican terms. The Democrats provided the votes needed to pass the bill in the Senate without getting any guarantees that Affordable Care Act subsidies, the central plank of Democrats' demands during the shutdown, would be restored. Instead of restoring subsidies, Republicans in the Senate only promised a vote by mid-December on extending them. There is no guarantee the measure will pass, with many Republicans already coming out in opposition. House Speaker Mike Johnson has not committed to holding a similar vote in the House. And any bill that passed Congress would face a Trump veto.

If a deal to restore the subsidies is not reached by the end of the year, health insurance premiums will spike on January 1, 2026 for an estimated 24 million people who receive their insurance through the marketplace.

New Hampshire Senator Jeanne Shaheen, one of the Democrats who voted to end the shutdown, said she hoped by "mid-December" there would be a "bipartisan" effort to vote on a bill to restore the subsidies.

Throughout the shutdown, as workers went without paychecks and food stamps were withheld, Democrats and their adjuncts in the trade union bureaucracy never raised the prospect of mass collective action to stop Trump's attacks on the working class and his dictatorial ambitions. Instead, the major airport workers' and government unions released statements calling on the two big business parties to come together and reopen the government.

Playing their assigned role as "loyal" opposition, the Democrats intervened to end the shutdown at precisely

the time the Trump administration was at its weakest. Last week, Democrats swept gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey, while a self-declared “democratic socialist,” Zohran Mamdani, garnered over a million votes in the New York City mayoral election.

A CNN/SSRS survey conducted at the end of October, shortly after some 7 million people participated in the “No Kings” protests, found Trump’s approval rating was only 37 percent, while 63 percent of respondents disapproved. Nearly 7 in 10 surveyed, 68 percent, agreed that things in America were “pretty/very bad.” Outrage over Trump’s attacks on immigrants is growing every day in the US, as more workers and community members are organizing independently against the kidnapping operations.

The Trump administration is not only widely hated but in an advanced state of political crisis. In the days leading up to the vote, Trump repeatedly called on Senate Republicans to abolish the filibuster and pass the budget through a simple majority. Republicans refused, and on Wednesday Trump fumed that the shutdown should never have happened and would not happen again if Republicans abolished the filibuster.

The spending bill is not just a straight funding proposal. It includes a ban on hemp-derived consumer products that were widely distributed in states where marijuana itself remains illegal. Lobbyists for the hemp industry estimate the ban will result in 300,000 job losses across retail and farming, a measure supported by both parties because it protects major cannabis firms and law enforcement interests.

In a special carve-out for Republican senators implicated in Trump’s failed coup, the legislation includes a payout for eight senators whose phone records were legally subpoenaed as part of Special Counsel Jack Smith’s aborted investigation into January 6. In addition to making it virtually illegal to subpoena a senator’s phone data without public disclosure, the bill would retroactively impose a \$500,000 fine for each record subpoenaed.

The eight Republican senators eligible for the taxpayer-funded payday are Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty of Tennessee, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming and Josh Hawley of Missouri. Tuberville, Lummis and Hawley all voted against certifying the 2020 election after the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Following the Democrats’ latest collaboration with

Trump, a handful of Democrats in the House and running for office in 2026 are promoting the fiction that if Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer were replaced, the Democrats would become an opposition party that fights for the working class. This ignores two centuries of history and the class character of the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans is controlled by, and operates on behalf of, the financial oligarchy.

Notably, as of this writing, not a single Democratic senator, including “independent” Bernie Sanders (Vermont) has called for Schumer’s removal following the vote. This is because the Democratic Party as a whole, not just Schumer, supported reopening Trump’s fascistic government so the administration could continue its attacks on the working class.

Following the vote in the Senate, Maine Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner, the preferred candidate of the pseudo-left, despite revelations of his fascist tattoo and social media messages, released a video blaming Schumer and calling for his ouster as leader. Schumer’s “failure,” according to Platner, was because “they do not understand when we fight we win.” Platner added, “we need to elect leaders that want to fight,” and urged viewers to call their representatives and demand Schumer’s removal.

Platner’s appeal to “fight” is nothing more than a cynical effort to channel mass anger at the latest betrayal back within the Democratic Party, which has once again demonstrated that it is not an opposition to Trump but his partner in crime and an instrument of the corporate and financial elite. The end of the shutdown on Republican terms, the ongoing assault on social programs, the collaboration of both parties in attacks on immigrants and the preparations for dictatorship all show that workers cannot defend their interests through either of the big business parties.



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