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ETHICS



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October 1, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Rand Beers
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
US Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Hagel and Acting Secretary Beers:

As you continue to implement the procedures triggered by the lapse in appropriations caused by the budget stalemate in Congress, I write to urge your consideration of implementing the broadest possible interpretation of exceptions to furloughs, as enacted in the Pay Our Military Act (HR 3210).

As you well know, our defense and homeland security civilians have paid an unacceptably high price for Congress's budget gridlock this year. In addition to the continued uncertainty caused by the lack of a stable and complete budget, furloughs related to sequestration were put into place in the defense department at a significant cost to hard working public servants and their families. Although ultimately truncated, these furloughs and overall uncertainty have had a damaging effect on morale within the ranks of our civilian workforce.

Now, with the triggering of a government shutdown, hundreds of defense and homeland security personnel showed up at work today only to be informed that they were on furlough. In just the early few hours of this event, operations at Naval Submarine Base New London, the facilities of the Connecticut National Guard, and the United States Coast Guard Academy have been disrupted – and many patriotic workers who are proud to support our men and women in uniform have been sent home. Some workers, such as our National Guard dual status military technicians, actually serve in uniform part time as a requirement of their job, yet remain subject to furloughs.

I strongly share your belief that the best way to end this impasse and put these people back to work is to enact a clean and bipartisan funding resolution that re-opens the government. I remain committed not only to that urgent task, but also working towards a bipartisan agreement on completing a full budget for 2014 – one that provides certainty to our federal agencies and our economy, and that ends the growing damage of sequestration.

However, at this time the outlook for even completing a short term continuing resolution is unclear at best. While I am hopeful for a quick resolution, it is possible that a shutdown could continue for at least a few days, if not longer. In that event, I urge that you use all authority

available to you to enact the broadest interpretation possible when implementing any furloughs under the government shutdown, with the goal of keeping as many of our hard working civilians in the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security at work in support of our military and our nation's security.

Thank you, as always, for your service in this challenging time.

Sincerely,



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress