



CUTLER FEDERAL FIREFIGHTERS, IAFF Local F-316

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DATE: March 7th, 2024

TO: Senator Donna Bailey, Senate Chair
Representative Anne Perry, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

RE: **In Support of** L.D. 2113, *“An Act to Provide Relief to Federal Employees Affected by a Federal Shutdown”*

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services,

My name is Scott Lizotte, and I am a federal fire fighter and a resident of Washington County. I am also the President of IAFF Local F-316, representing the federal fire fighters stationed at Naval Support Activity Cutler. I submit this testimony today in favor of and to advocate for the urgent passage of SP906/LD2113, an essential response to the devastating impact of federal government shutdowns on the lives of federal employees and their families. The unfortunate reality is that when political extremism in Washington grinds the federal government to a halt, it is the federal employees who bear the brunt of the consequences, often working without pay. While our state legislators may not have the power to control extremism in Washington, they do possess the authority to provide temporary relief to these workers.

According to OPM Maine is home to just shy of 12,000 federal civilian employees. In the event of a shutdown roughly 4,500 Maine workers could be furloughed and sent home with the other 7,000 federal employees classified as essential or excepted and forced to report to work without a paycheck. Federal employees in Maine are the backbone of essential services, from maintaining our Navy submarines to providing Social Security benefits to seniors and safeguarding aviation, infrastructure, public safety, and our borders. Yet, when they are furloughed or compelled to work without compensation, they face a daunting challenge: struggling to pay for heat, put food on the table, and meet their financial obligations. It is crucial to understand that these dedicated individuals are not the architects of federal shutdowns and should not be pawns in partisan games.

As the cost of living continues to rise, the financial hardships faced by our federal employees in Washington County and across the state are exacerbated. Federal employees, who play a pivotal role in the stability and functioning of our government, find themselves grappling not only with the immediate consequences of a shutdown but also with the broader economic challenges fueled by inflation. A majority of my members face serious financial instability during a shutdown and L.D. 2113 is a beacon of hope for them and their families. The one thing this bill fails to address is the employees of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the largest provider of federal employees in Maine, who work in Maine and pay state income tax, but are residents of NH.

As you deliberate on this legislation, I implore each member of this esteemed committee to support LD2113. By doing so, we send a resounding message that our state stands in solidarity with hardworking federal workers and their families during times of crisis. Together, let us ensure that they receive the temporary relief they desperately need.

Thank you for your consideration of this crucial and urgent legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Lizotte, President
Cutler Federal Firefighters
IAFF Local F-316

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