



LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 28, 2019

The Honorable Alexander Acosta  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Acosta,

I write to you today on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of federal workers in Maryland. As you know, we recently experienced the nation's longest government shutdown. The potentiality of another shutdown looms on February 16th. According to the Maryland Comptroller's Office, approximately 172,000 Maryland federal employees and contractors have been impacted, many of whom experienced hardship putting food on the table, fuel in their vehicles, and paying their mortgages, rent, and utility bills.

A large number of the impacted Marylanders are considered "essential personnel" and were forced to work without pay while continuing to incur the costs of commuting to work (e.g., gas, tolls, parking, childcare) as well as maintaining the daily necessities of life (e.g., food, clothing, shelter) for themselves and their dependents. While federal law was recently enacted guaranteeing these federal employees will receive back pay, the status quo is untenable and unfairly punishes responsible workers. Simply put, it is unreasonable to expect these workers to continue to bear the brunt of the consequences of government shutdowns without offering meaningful financial assistance.


In order to meet the immediate needs of essential personnel who otherwise will not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, I am therefore writing to request that the U.S. Department of Labor provide federal funds for reimbursement of unemployment insurance benefits paid to essential personnel required to work without pay and for any administrative costs associated with paying those benefits.

I also ask that the U.S. Department of Labor waive existing unemployment insurance eligibility criteria under Title 20, Section 609.3(d) of the Code of Federal Regulations (20 CFR 609.3(d)), or, in the alternative, work with Congress on advancing legislation to provide the regulatory flexibility necessary to enable the State of Maryland to provide unemployment insurance benefits to essential personnel who are working without pay.

Your assistance in providing federal funds for reimbursement, approving our waiver request, or, in the alternative, working with Congress on legislation to amend the eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance benefits would allow the State of Maryland to assist our affected citizens in the event of any future government shutdowns. Working together, we can demonstrate compassion and empathy for these hardworking individuals and their families.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you to bring this to a resolution. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my Director of Federal Relations, Tiffany Waddell, at [tiffany.waddell@maryland.gov](mailto:tiffany.waddell@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Larry Hogan  
Governor

cc: Tiffany Waddell, Director of Federal Relations  
James E. Rzepkowski, Acting Secretary, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation  
Dayne Freeman, Assistant Secretary, Division of Unemployment Insurance