



January 18, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

As governors of States that many of our nation's maritime first responders call home, we write to you today to express our concern for our United States Coast Guard's servicemembers due to the federal government's partial shutdown. As you know, the federal government last paid Coast Guard active-duty members on December 31, 2018. The Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Karl Schlutz, has conveyed that, to his knowledge, the lack of mid-month paychecks to the Coast Guard on January 15, 2019, "marks the first time in our Nation's history that servicemembers in a U.S. Armed Force have not been paid during a lapse in government appropriations." Such a result is unacceptable and we strongly advocate that you work with Congress to immediately resolve the shutdown. If this partisan gamesmanship must continue, we urge you to help our Coast Guard servicemembers avoid enduring any additional difficulty and pain by creating a separate fund that allows their families to receive federal food assistance through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). If the federal government will not pay them their salary, we must ensure that they have the resources to provide for themselves and their families.

A missed paycheck creates countless hardships that are already being felt by these patriotic families. The lack of pay puts their ability to pay their basic bills and provide even the bare necessities, such as food and shelter, for their loved ones in real danger. We write to you with serious concern that these servicemembers may not be able to put food on the table and, to make matters worse, that they may also be cut off from assistance while missing the paycheck they deserve.

While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has attempted to issue February's SNAP benefits by allowing states to distribute those benefits in January, before a provision in the Continuing Resolution fully expires, states must process and issue next month's applications and benefits this month. Coast Guard servicemembers, many of whom previously did not need food stamps assistance, have only just missed their first paycheck and may not have known they would need SNAP assistance, but may miss this window.

Accordingly, we urge you to use your existing authorities, current reserves, and any other means necessary to create a separate reserve fund for new SNAP cases that is dedicated to the men and women of the United States Coast Guard. They and their families have sacrificed so much for this country, and, through no fault of their own, are in danger of not receiving the help they need. Such a result should be unthinkable in our great country, and we urge you to take steps to prevent it from becoming a reality.

These brave servicemembers should not be caught in the political crossfire happening in Washington, and they certainly should not have to worry about their next meal. Please work with us to ensure that America takes care of those who protect her.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Phil Murphy
State of New Jersey

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Roy Cooper
State of North Carolina