



SENIOR EXECUTIVES ASSOCIATION

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Senior Executives Association Urges Congress and Administration to Avert Shutdown, Reject Threats of Permanent Workforce Cuts

WASHINGTON, DC – September 29, 2025 – The Senior Executives Association (SEA), representing the interests of over 8,000 career federal executives in the Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST), and equivalent positions, today released the following statement urging Congress and the Trump Administration to avoid a government shutdown and abandon proposals to permanently reduce the federal workforce.

“Continuing resolutions and threats of a shutdown are things senior executives in the federal government have grown used to and during which they lead adeptly. The threat of mass reductions in force is an unprecedented development and should it come to pass would significantly impair the government’s ability to perform important functions that benefit the American people,” said SEA President Marcus Hill.

Continuing resolutions have become the norm in federal budgeting every year since 1997. During these lapses, many SES members and other leaders are deemed “essential” and must continue working without pay, while others are prohibited from working at all. No organization can be expected to maintain peak performance under those conditions—where leaders either serve without compensation or are prevented from serving altogether. The result harms not only federal employees and the agencies carrying out its missions, but also the American people, who experience reduced, delayed, or halted services.

Congress has since enacted a law requiring all furloughed federal employees receive backpay following a lapse in appropriations, an important protection SEA strongly supports. Still, temporary furloughs—not permanent layoffs—are the appropriate response to a temporary funding lapse. Not since the early 1980s has any Administration seriously considered using reductions-in-force as a shutdown tactic. Doing so now would inflict permanent damage on the workforce and gravely weaken the government’s ability to deliver on programs already authorized by law.

The costs of shutdowns are well known: lost economic output, disrupted public services, diminished workforce morale, and wasted taxpayer dollars. Adding the threat of mass firings would compound the harm and undermine the trust of SES and other leaders, as well as all federal employees and the public they serve.

“Congress and the Administration must fulfill their most basic responsibility—to fund government operations on time and in full,” Hill added. “Negotiating appropriations, or enacting continuing resolutions when needed, is the responsible way to ensure government leaders can serve the Nation effectively. Using shutdowns or permanent layoffs as bargaining chips only weakens how the SES can help govern our country effectively and efficiently.”

Despite these recurring challenges, SEA commends the dedication, professionalism, and resilience of its members and the entire career federal leadership corps. Time and again, they have upheld their oaths of service, ensuring continuity of government and safeguarding programs vital to the American people—even under the most difficult and uncertain circumstances.

The Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association representing Senior Executive Service members and other career federal executives. Founded in 1980, SEA’s goals are to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of the federal government; to advance the professionalism and advocate the interests of career federal executives; and to enhance public recognition of their contributions. For more information, visit www.seniorexecs.org.

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