

US Government Shutdowns

What are They and What Are Their Effects?

(Translated)

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Why do we hear about a US government shutdown every year or every few years? And what does it mean?

In short, when the two major parties in Congress, Republicans and Democrats, fail to agree on a budget to fund the government, the government shuts down, resulting in a government shutdown. This year, the shutdown occurred at the end of September, when the previous fiscal year's budget expired, leading to the federal government's closure—the first such shutdown since 2018—with no end in sight.

The reason for the shutdown this year is the failure of Republicans and Democrats in the Senate to agree on two bills:

First: A bill proposed by the Democrats to guarantee government funding until the end of October 2025 and to extend federal health care subsidies that are scheduled to end at the end of the year.

Second: The Democrats refused to join the Republicans in approving a short-term measure passed by the House of Representatives to maintain government funding at current levels until the end of November 2025.

The key players in the shutdown are, of course, both the Republican and Democratic parties, represented by the US President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives (Republican), the Senate Majority Leader (Republican), the Democratic Minority Leader in the House of Representatives (Democrat), and the Senate Minority Leader (Democrat).

What impact will the shutdown have on government employees and the rest of the population?

The White House has said it will furlough thousands of federal employees, and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt and Vice President Vance reiterated that this will happen soon.

This means that many employees will lose their salaries, if they want to continue working, and many will lose jobs. For example, medical facilities will operate without interruption, air traffic controllers and airport security personnel will work but without pay, and food safety inspections will continue, with the workers not being paid.

Congress will continue to function, and members will continue to be paid, while thousands of employees will not receive their salaries until after the shutdown ends, unless they are laid off.

The effects of the government shutdown on the economy and the people are catastrophic by all measures. Shutterstock magazine reported on 6/10/2025 that America is losing \$15 billion a week from its GDP as the government shutdown continues. A memo issued by the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), a United States agency within the Executive Office of the President, stated that there has been an increase in the number of unemployed by 43,000 people, in addition to the damage inflicted on about 1.9 million federal civil servants who have become temporarily unemployed or are working without pay.

As for ordinary people, the memo explains that it will directly affect women, infants, and children who depend on federally funded private care programs, beneficiaries of

social security and Medicare, and certain educational and training programs whose funding is subject to periodic review.

The government shutdown is also directly affecting air traffic and airport activity, as absenteeism has tripled among Transportation Security Administration (TSA) staff and air traffic controllers who are supposed to work without pay during the shutdown.

Similarly, funding for the Women, Infants and Children's supplemental nutrition program (WIC) is rapidly running out, while the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly known as food vouchers – is expected to last longer, but it too is not immune to being discontinued.

The government shutdown is also reflected in the gross domestic product, which is shrinking by about 0.1% weekly due to the decline in government activity.

In this context, the Trump administration has so far frozen at least \$28 billion in funding for Democratic cities and states, escalating Trump's campaign to use the extraordinary power of the U.S. government to punish political opponents.

Political developments indicate that the situation is heading towards further escalation with regard to the labor market, as the administration of US President Donald Trump may begin mass layoffs of federal employees, if the president sees that negotiations with Democrats in Congress will not make any progress at all.

It's worth noting that President Trump, who has long advocated for spending cuts and job reductions at the federal level, has made no secret of the fact that the government shutdown could be used as a pretext to further reduce programs and services he deems essential to the Democrats. Yet, at the same time, he spends lavishly on entertainment programs, such as building a ballroom at the White House, and hosting Halloween celebrations that cost the treasury millions of dollars.

There are many negative effects on the economy, individuals, the army, security, and companies, which are too numerous to explain and cannot all be mentioned here, but ultimately, the results are disastrous and devastating for the country.

Strangely, all these disasters caused by the government shutdown every year, or every few years, pass over the American people as if they were divine decree or a natural disaster, without arousing any form of complaint from them, despite their suffering and the loss of their jobs, their daily sustenance, and their children's milk. They become accustomed to it every time as if it were a lightning storm or a season of the day! As for the parties that ruled the country and enslaved the people, their unspoken message is: Although we set your system of life, controlled your daily sustenance, plundered your resources, and ruled you with only two parties—red or blue—we still hold you responsible for the consequences of our corruption, our differences, and our conflicts over you. The only way to resolve our disputes is by punishing you and making you bear the burden of our corruption because you deserve the punishment. You are the ones who chose us and crowned us as your leaders, and you accepted us and were content with our democracy as your religion. So, taste the torment of humiliation for what you used to dream of.

This has been the nature of capitalism since its inception, this is its approach to life and this is its view of its people, and its condition will not change except with its demise. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا﴾ **“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a life of hardship”** [TMQ Surah Taha: 124].