

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2019

Alexander Acosta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

RE: Request to Issue Guidance on Unemployment Insurance Benefits for Federal Workers

Dear Secretary Acosta:

As you know, today marks the 32nd day of the federal government shutdown, the longest in our nation's history. In New Jersey, there are over 6,700 federal employees who are working without pay or have been furloughed. They work on a variety of critical missions and agencies, from the Federal Aviation Administration, the Coast Guard, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Department of Agriculture, to the Fish and Wildlife Service, for example. These federal employees often risk their safety to protect and serve the public, yet the federal government has failed to keep its end of the bargain. To make matters worse, we have heard from affected federal employees throughout New Jersey that they have been denied unemployment insurance benefits because they will eventually receive back pay once the government opens for business. This ignores the fact that cash flow is running low in many households because they have already missed one paycheck and there seems to be no end in sight to the government shutdown.

We have heard from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, which administers unemployment insurance benefits, that furloughed workers are indeed eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, but federal workers required to work without pay are not eligible. **We urge you to immediately issue guidance to state workforce agencies to ensure that essential federal workers who have been working without pay are able to access unemployment insurance benefits as soon as possible.**



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress