

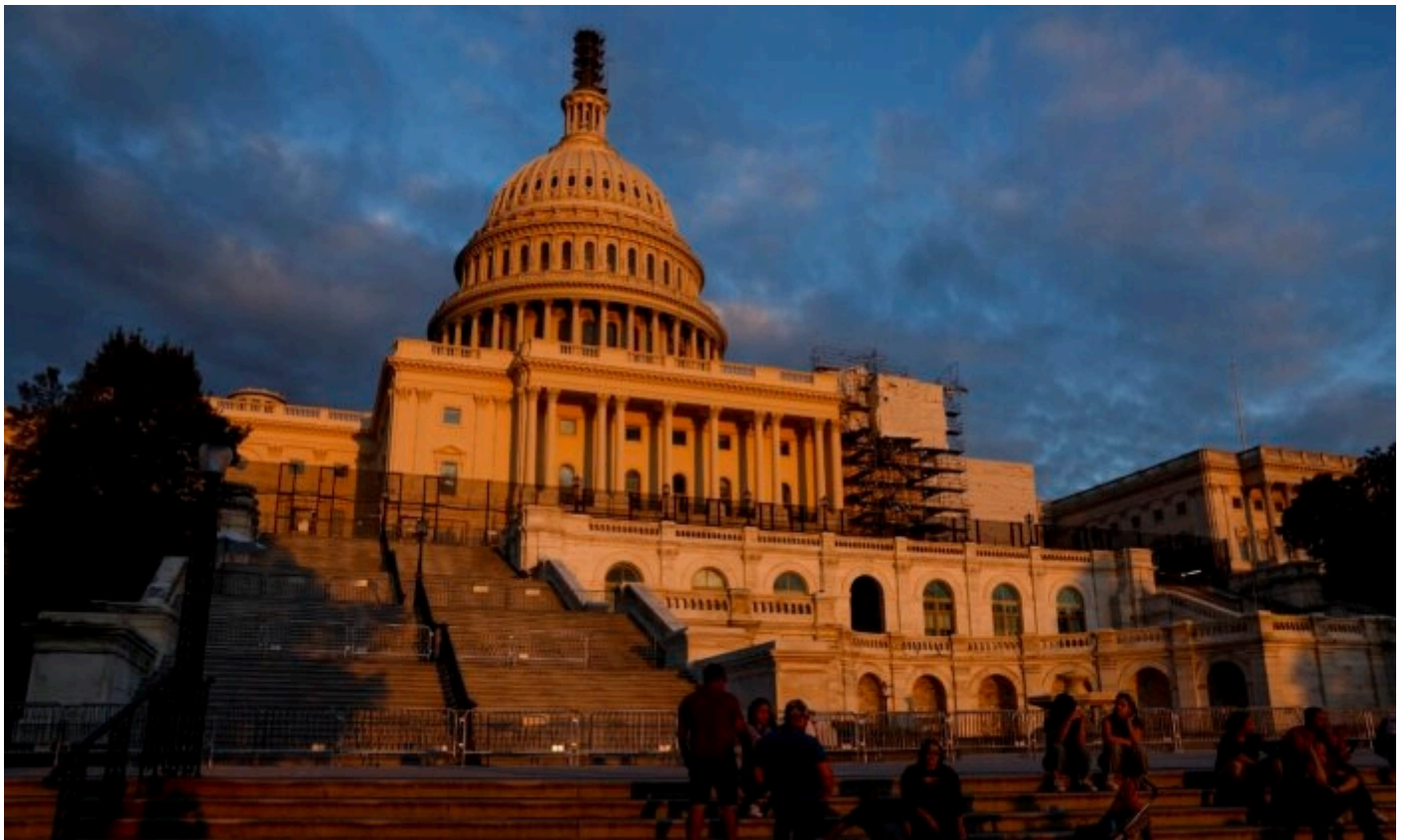
# What to Know About a Government Shutdown

Some essential workers are not furloughed and continue with the basic duties of government, such as protecting the homeland.

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The U.S. Capitol Building in Washington on Sept. 30, 2023. Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images



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Unless Congress funds the government past Dec. 20, there will be a shutdown. Such an occurrence could have major ramifications, though it may not be all doom and gloom.

The longest [shutdown](#) was 34 days during the Trump administration between December 2018 and January 2019.

The possibility of a shutdown comes after President-elect Donald Trump chimed in on a bipartisan bill to fund the government through March 14 that included other legislation such as a one-year extension of the farm bill, disaster relief, and transferring control of RFK Memorial Stadium from the federal government to the District of Columbia.

House Republicans scrapped several provisions from that plan and released a new bill on the evening of Dec. 19 that would have suspended the debt ceiling until the end of January 2027.

“Increasing the debt ceiling is not great but we’d rather do it on Biden’s watch,” Trump and Vice President-elect JD Vance wrote in a Dec. 18 joint statement [posted](#) to Truth Social. “Let’s have this debate now. And we should pass a streamlined spending bill.”

This bill, known as a continuing resolution, would have funded the government at current levels. However, it was rejected in a 235–174 vote.

Here is what would happen were there to be a government shutdown.

## **Essential Workers and Functions Continue**

Just because the government shuts down, that doesn’t mean everyone is furloughed.

After all, the government still needs to perform its basic duties, such as protecting the homeland. Agencies that have many essential employees include the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI.

Essential employees also include Border Patrol agents, TSA agents, and FAA personnel. However, agencies warned of longer wait times, so people planning on taking a plane to visit friends and family might want to leave earlier than scheduled.

Each agency determines who would perform what the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [calls](#) “excepted work.” Presidential appointees are not classified as such.

There are also “emergency employees,” who are not necessarily essential workers, but must report for duty in the event of natural disasters, power failures, “and other situations in which significant numbers of employees are prevented from reporting for work or which require agencies to close all or part of their activities,” according to the Office of Personnel Management.

Employees who work during a shutdown do not receive pay during that period.

## **Medicare and Social Security Checks Still Go Out**

Those who rely on Medicare and Social Security would not have to worry about those services being put on hold in the event of a shutdown as those items are classified under non-discretionary spending.

However, processing times can be affected by a shutdown.

The Social Security Administration will not process certain items such as overpayments.

## **National Parks and Smithsonian Museums Closed**

Want to see the latest exhibit at one of the 21 Smithsonian Museums in the nation's capital? You're out of luck, as those museums, which have no admission cost, would be [required to temporarily close](#) in the event of a shutdown.

This [includes](#) the National Zoo, though, don't worry, the animals will still be taken care of.

How about seeing the sunset at the Grand Canyon? Forget about it as most national parks are [also closed](#) during a shutdown.

Finally, if you want to see a Raphael or a da Vinci at the National Gallery of Art, you will have to wait until the shutdown is resolved.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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