



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Minority Leader Schumer,

I write to inform you that you are the recipient of my November 2025 Golden Fleece Award for your central role in instigating and prolonging the most costly and unnecessary government shutdown in our nation's history.

The recent shutdown of the federal government has inflicted deep and lasting harm on taxpayers, public servants, and communities nationwide. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the government shutdown could shave up to two percentage points off of fourth-quarter GDP and result in between \$7 billion and \$14 billion in permanent economic losses, output that will never be recovered.¹ CBO also estimates that \$54 billion in federal spending was delayed, including \$16 billion in unpaid compensation for federal employees and billions more in postponed contracts and services.¹ Taxpayers will foot the bill for full back pay to those furloughed, meaning because of Democrats' obstruction, Americans must pay twice: once for backpay and again for catchup work. The shutdown's impact was felt most acutely by the millions of Americans who rely on federal paychecks and services to support their families and communities.

Here in Arkansas, the toll has been both economic and human. The Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) projects that the shutdown reduced Arkansas's Gross State Product by approximately \$98 million each week, or nearly \$425 million per month, while increasing unemployment by roughly 400 workers for every month the shutdown endured.² Over 20,000 Arkansan federal employees have either been furloughed or required to work without pay.²

¹ Congressional Budget Office. *A Quantitative Analysis of the Effects of the Government Shutdown on the Economy Under Three Scenarios as of October 29, 2025*. Published October 29, 2025.
<https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-10/61823-Shutdown.pdf>

² White House Council of Economic Advisers. *Economic Impacts of the Government Shutdown in Arkansas*. Published October 1, 2025 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/AR-Shutdown-One-Pager.pdf>

Thousands of airmen, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) staff, and civilian personnel supporting Little Rock Air Force Base, the VA Medical Center, and the U.S. Forest Service have seen their paychecks withheld or delayed. Members of the Arkansas National Guard, approximately 8,600 strong statewide, also faced delayed compensation, furlough, and disrupted training. These men and women put duty first, yet Washington's dysfunction, driven by you and Senate Democrats, left their families bearing the financial cost of your failed leadership.

Among those showing exceptional professionalism were Air Traffic Controllers at Clinton National Airport, who continued working without pay even after the elevator in their control tower broke down. The Air Traffic Controllers climbed multiple flights of stairs every day and night to keep our skies safe. While their perseverance is a shining example of the selflessness displayed by federal employees during this crisis, if you and Senate Democrats had not haphazardly shut down the government they would never have had to endure this.

Transportation networks were disrupted nationwide due to the government shutdown. The Federal Aviation Administration reduced air-traffic volume, leading to more than 10,000 flight delays and cancellations since early November. This was in large part due to the strain on Air Traffic Controllers who were required to work without pay. While many were forced to seek other jobs to make ends meet, those who reported to work when their country needed them quickly experienced burnout.

Air Traffic Controllers are not allowed to work for more than 90 minutes to 120 minutes before they must take a 15 minute to 45 minute break, this has led to longer shifts and less time off. The unnecessary shutdown put our skies at risk and could have led to a tragedy at our airports. Travelers across the country, including countless Arkansans, paid the price for your unnecessary partisan brinkmanship.

The shutdown's strain extended to the hundreds of thousands of Arkansas families dependent on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As the shutdown stretched into November, the SNAP contingency fund proved insufficient to continue benefits beyond 30 days, forcing families to fear lapses in support. Under your leadership, Senate Democrats stalled and failed the American people and failed to fund SNAP 14 times, with more than 240,000 Arkansans, including 93,000 children, relying on SNAP. Your shutdown forced these families to face the real possibility of going hungry, all to score political points.

The impact also extended to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, whose limited contingency funding was projected to run out after just one week, leaving 63,000 Arkansas recipients in jeopardy of losing vital nutritional support.²

Veterans and seniors were likewise trapped in bureaucratic limbo, forced to deal with unnecessary stress. With federal offices minimally staffed, VA disability claims, Social Security determinations, and passport processing slowed to a crawl. My district casework team witnessed the growing backlog firsthand, unable to move dozens of cases forward while critical adjudicators were furloughed.

The shutdown also harmed our nation's small-business economy. Small Business Administration loan distributions, totaling about \$14 million each month in Arkansas, were frozen, and federal contract spending fell by an estimated \$34 million in just one month. Combined with unpaid wages, consumer spending in Arkansas declined by approximately \$169 million per month, undercutting local businesses and slowing economic growth.²

Meanwhile, America's national parks suffered from vandalism, littering, and property damage as security and maintenance ceased, all while losing millions of dollars in valuable revenue from visitors.³ Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas struggled to stay open with a skeleton crew, canceling programs and cutting visitor services.⁴ With a lapse in funding and only essential workers reporting to work, multiple programs supporting families and attracting tourists closed down. Without these employees, the safety and oversight of our parks was disrupted. Our local economies suffered, Americans could have been hurt, and our national parks potentially damaged forever.

This shutdown was avoidable. The actions from Senate Democrats resulted in uncertainty for families, federal workers working without pay, and billions of dollars wasted. After weeks of damage, I am relieved that 8 more of your colleagues came to their senses and joined the bipartisan majority, accepting Majority Leader Thune's offer to hold a vote on the enhanced Affordable Care Act premium tax credits after the government was reopened – the same deal that had been on the table for weeks.

Leader Schumer, this shutdown, and the harm it caused, lies squarely at your feet and the feet of Senate Democrats who voted to keep our government closed 14 times at your direction. The shutdown was a failure of your leadership, a waste of taxpayer dollars, and an unnecessary act of political brinkmanship that used the American people as pawns in a partisan fight. Your actions were reckless and beneath the position you hold.

I sincerely hope you will not repeat this regrettable conduct. The American people deserve leaders who govern responsibly, not politicians who gamble with their livelihoods. We are elected to lead, not to hold the government, and those who serve it, hostage for political gain.

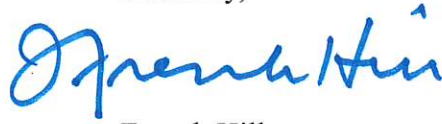
³ USA TODAY. *National park communities may lose millions each day during the shutdown*. Published October 21, 2025. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/experience/national-parks/2025/10/21/government-shutdown-costing-national-parks-communities/86708055007/>

⁴ Hot Springs National Park. *Partial National Park Shutdown Doesn't Affect Dozens Of Other Attractions in Hot Springs*. Published October 1, 2025. <https://www.hotsprings.org/media-room/press-releases/partial-national-park-shutdown-doesnt-affect-dozens-of-other-attractions-in-hot-springs/>

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
November 17, 2025
Page 4

For these reasons, I am awarding you the November 2025 Golden Fleece Award for wasting taxpayer resources, delaying vital services, and inflicting needless hardship on the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "French Hill", with a small mark below the first letter.

French Hill
Member of Congress