



The Economic
Progress Institute

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EPI STATEMENT

Stop the Blame Game & End the Government Shutdown Now!

PROVIDENCE, RI: *Economic Progress Institute (EPI) Executive Director Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies issued the following statement regarding the imposition of a federal government shutdown today:*

The federal government has shut down because Republicans in Congress have refused to protect 22 million people, including 40,000 low- and middle-income Rhode Islanders, from losing enhanced premium tax credits to pay for healthcare. Our family members, friends, and neighbors who obtain coverage through HealthSource RI will lose subsidies and see their monthly premiums increase by an average of 85 percent.

Programs like Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) will halt almost immediately. Millions, including nearly 20,000 Rhode Islanders, rely on WIC for food benefits, nutrition counseling, and infant formula. Losing these supports will devastate families with young children. Working families shouldn't have to pay the price for political gridlock.

There could also be delays in enrollment and delivery of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, on which 144,000 Rhode Islanders rely for food security. The government shutdown is happening at a time when food insecurity is at an all-time high, with 38% of RI households struggling to afford adequate food, according to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.



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The shutdown also could delay processing and disbursement of housing vouchers, halt loan processing through the Small Business Administration, and result in furloughs and loss of income for federal workers. There are more than 8,500 federal civilian employees in our state. They are janitors, scientists, accountants, elected officials, and many more. They provide a wide range of critical public services.

For most of the year, Congress has refused to fill its role as a check and a balance against the Executive Branch of government. The Trump Administration's unlawful canceling and freezing of funding approved on a bipartisan basis will cause substantial harm for years to come. That Congress will not put up guardrails to stop this behavior is another reason the government has shut down today.

Healthcare and basic needs programs are essential lifelines and should not be used as bargaining chips. Elected officials should put people over politics, extend enhanced premium tax credits, and fulfill their most basic duty: to keep the government open and working for the people it serves. Let's stop the blame game, tell the truth, and protect people!

We urge concerned Rhode Islanders to call the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives at 202-225-4000 and demand that he ends the shutdown. We also urge any Rhode Islander experiencing hardship or emergency because of the shutdown to call 211 at the United Way of Rhode Island. It is a free, confidential call that will connect you with the appropriate resources you need in your community, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

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EPI envisions and fights for a Rhode Island where concrete and consistent investments are made in people. A state where we all have healthcare when we're sick, a safe place to live, childcare that doesn't break the bank, nutritious food to eat, and access to opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, age, or zip code. To learn more about us, visit www.economicprogressri.org.



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