

Heinrich introduces legislation to aid federal workers during government shutdown

Written by By Martin Heinrich Press Office
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WASHINGTON, D.C. –U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., introduced the Federal Employee Civil Relief Act that would protect federal workers and their families from foreclosures, evictions, and loan defaults during a government shutdown. The partial government shutdown, now in its third week, hurts more than 800,000 federal workers in all 50 states, including nearly 6,000 in New Mexico.

“Federal employees and their families across New Mexico are being hit especially hard by President Trump’s reckless and unnecessary shutdown,” said Senator Heinrich. “This bill would help alleviate financial stress and protect federal workers in New Mexico impacted by the shutdown. I will continue urging Senate Republicans and the president to pass our bipartisan proposal to reopen the government immediately.”

The bill addresses the real threat of federal workers losing their homes, falling behind on student loans and other bills, having their car repossessed, or losing their health insurance because they have been furloughed during a shutdown or required to work without pay.

Modeled after the Service members Relief Act, the legislation will prohibit landlords and creditors from taking action against federal workers or contractors who are hurt by the government shutdown and unable to pay rent or repay loans. The bill would also empower federal workers to sue creditors or landlords that violate this protection.

The Federal Employee Civil Relief Act would safeguard workers impacted by a shutdown from the following:

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Being evicted or foreclosed;

Having their car or other property repossessed;

Falling behind in student loan payments;

Falling behind in paying bills; or

Losing their insurance because of missed premiums.

The protection would last during and 30 days following a shutdown to give workers a chance to keep up with their bills.

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