

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2019

The Honorable Russell Vought
Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC

The Honorable Margaret Weichert
Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management
Washington, DC

Dear Acting Director Vought and Director Weichert:

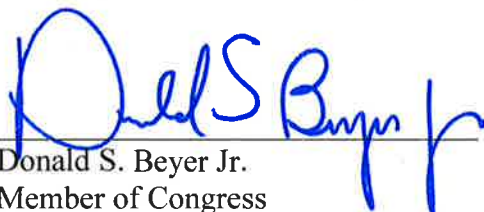
We write you out of concern regarding the impact of the now 34-day-long government shutdown on federal employees currently holding or seeking security clearances and determinations of trust at the affected agencies.

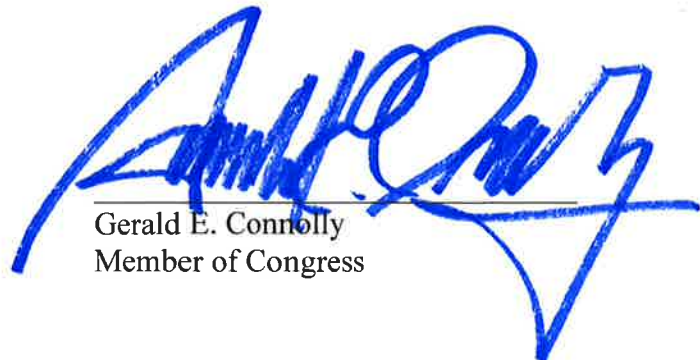
Financial considerations are a central piece of the investigation into an employee's candidacy for a security clearance, as they indicate reliability and trustworthiness, as well as vulnerability to illegal activities. Guidelines established for all U.S. government personnel, consultants, and contractors seeking security clearances make this clear. And, notably, financial issues historically outpace all other issues as the chief reason cited for security clearance denial.

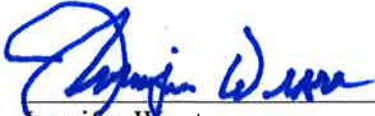
Over 800,000 federal employees (essential and non-essential alike) have missed their paychecks due to the government shutdown and will miss a second paycheck tomorrow. We have heard from many of these employees—our constituents—about the ensuing struggle to pay bills, including rent and mortgage payments, utility bills, student loans, credit card bills, and much more. Missing even just one of these regular payments can of course be detrimental to employees' credit scores. It is crucial that we take whatever steps necessary to ensure that the missed paychecks, and wounded credit scores, are not detrimental to their security clearances or security clearance applications as well.

Thus, we urge you to issue new guidance as soon as possible for clearance investigations that explicitly prohibits agencies from penalizing security clearance applicants and holders for shutdown-induced poor credit.

Sincerely,


Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress


Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



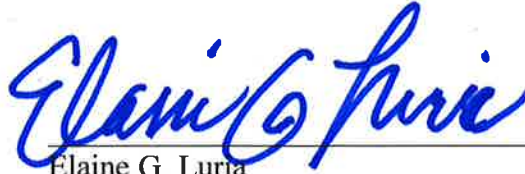
Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress



Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress