



**National
Urban League**

**To Be Equal #43
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Don't Repeat the Shutdown**

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"Extremes to the right and to the left of any political dispute are always wrong." Dwight D. Eisenhower

After 16 days of a costly and unnecessary government shutdown, America is open for business again. More than 800,000 furloughed federal workers are back on the job. Nutrition programs for low income women and children are back in service. The CDC's flu program and the FDA's food safety efforts are back on track. Head Start programs are reopening their doors. NIH is resuming clinical trials for children with cancer. Our National Parks and Museums have reopened. And financing for thousands of small businesses is flowing again.

We join all Americans in applauding the compromise deal crafted by Senate Majority leader Harry Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. But it is only a temporary fix. The bill passed by both chambers and signed by President Obama at 12:30 am on October 17 only funds the government until January 15 and extends the debt ceiling until February 7. Congress now faces a "90-day sprint" to craft a balanced, responsible budget that works for the American people, maintains health care coverage for millions through the Affordable Care Act, and avoids another government shutdown. We urge our elected leaders to put aside partisan rancor and get this job done. They were sent to Washington to govern on behalf of all Americans and they have a special duty to prevent a repeat of a shutdown that cost our economy \$24 billion and was especially damaging to middle class families, small businesses, the working poor and the unemployed.

A budget conference committee headed by Democrat Patty Murray in the Senate and Republican Paul Ryan in the House has now been formed to meet a December 13 deadline for a long-term budget agreement. This won't be easy, with the House majority arguing for extending the onerous sequester cuts to important safety-net programs and resisting any new taxes, while the Senate majority wants to make smart investments to spur job growth, grow the economy and maintain support for vital programs that assist millions of Americans. Both sides say they share the goal of growing the economy and putting people back to work. The key to success will be finding common ground on the way to achieve those objectives.

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We believe that any final agreement must put the needs of the American people first. We must protect programs that empower individuals and communities through good jobs, access to affordable housing and healthcare, and quality education. As President Obama said in his weekly address to the Nation, "We should sit down and pursue a balanced approach to a responsible budget, one that grows our economy faster and shrinks our long-term deficits further. There is no choice between growth and fiscal responsibility – we need both."

We agree. And as we move forward, we must also avoid the kind of ideological rigidity that led to the shutdown. We are especially offended by the continued extremist comments of Representative Ted Cruz who has refused to rule out another government shutdown over his desire to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. We have a simple question for Mr. Cruz: How can you make the argument for spending cuts or rally against spending on a law that would actually reduce the deficit and ensure healthcare for all Americans and at the same time support a shutdown that cost the economy \$24 billion...with nothing to show for it? Makes no sense.

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