

Shut Down Community Comment October 10, 2013 Mike Goldsby

We are at day 10 of a government shut-down of non essential services, based on a congressional budget stalemate. A lot of services are non essential. That is, until you need them.

I was surprised to learn that there have been many federal government shutdowns in recent history. Andrew Stiles writes in the National Review that the Federal Government has shut down briefly 17 times since 1976. It happened to Jimmy Carter and to Ronald Reagan. There was a government shutdown during one of the big fights between Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. In 1995, Federal employees were furloughed for 3 weeks.

Essential services include the Postal Service, Social Security administration and Medicare. The active military is essential but apparently parts of the Veteran's Administration are not deemed essential. So families of military killed in action were suddenly stranded without assistance. This is no way to respect the ultimate sacrifice of our service men and women, but this is the kind of thing that happens when you shut things down. Apparently this gap is being addressed by some interim legislation.

Much of the National Space Administration is shut down but NASA is still supporting the 6 people aboard the international space station. That's good. National Parks are closed by congressional inaction. But that did not stop some congressmen and women from trying to make themselves look good by protesting the closure of war memorials in Washington DC.

One of my Facebook friends posted "Ask not what congress can do for you. Seriously, don't bother asking them. They aren't working."

Several weeks ago, some elements of the Republican Party expressed their intentions to not pass a budget to purposefully shut down the federal government. The stated purpose was to end the Affordable Healthcare Act. The Republican Representative from Minnesota, Michelle Bachmann, said quote "I am very excited about closing down the government. It's exactly what we wanted and

we got it." She and her colleagues were very explicit about not approving a budget and shutting down the federal government.

Now, many of these same people are trying to blame the Democrats. Even the conservative Koch Brothers are distancing themselves from the shut down strategy. Why? NBC news analysts believe it is because of the dire negative consequences that will happen if Congress does not act on the debt limit. The stock market has gone down just by the suggestion that this could happen. Defaulting on our loans will damage the global economy and damage the US credit rating. This would all harm American businesses.

Apparently there will be progress this week getting both parties to sit down and hammer some kind of a budget agreement out. I hope it happens sooner rather than later. I imagine the Affordable Care Act will remain intact. Hopefully, Democrats can work with Republican leaders like Rand Paul to clean up the tax code and reduce expenditures and reduce debt.

A majority of voters elected Barrack Obama twice and reform of healthcare insurance coverage was one of his main campaign promises. As Obama stated, in the future, when the Affordable Care Act is successful and every American has access to medical insurance, you can bet critics won't be calling it Obama Care.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment