

What Americans Can Expect from a Government Shutdown



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Barring a miracle, the US government will shut down on October 1 because House Republicans reneged on the bipartisan debt limit deal Speaker McCarthy negotiated with President Biden. Without funding to remain open, many functions of government will cease. From what we know about recent government shutdowns, it's clear we risk damaging effects.

Here's what Americans can expect from a government shutdown:

- **Travel woes.** Long security lines, passport issue delays, and personnel shortage: if this shutdown resembles the one in 2019, travel is going to be a huge headache. Air traffic controllers and TSA agents would have to work without pay, which could result in last-minute flight cancellations. If you're planning to visit a national park, expect trash build-up, dirty bathrooms, and closed concessions.

- **Economic slowdown.** Some economists estimate a shutdown costs the economy \$13 billion a week. We could see small businesses bearing the brunt: the Small Business Administration would stop issuing loans to new applicants, hurting an integral foundation for middle-class workers. Your favorite brewery, for example, might be forced to close; in 2019, the Treasury Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau's ability to issue certifications reduced revenues for 7,300 brewers, affecting 135,000 jobs.
- **Child care setbacks.** Children would lose Head Start benefits, leaving thousands of families without preschool child care, thanks to the Republicans' gambit.
- **Disrupted care for veterans.** Processing Veterans Disability claims will slow, impacting our servicemembers' access to disability benefits, transition benefits, and VA care. HUD's grants to help disabled veterans will be disrupted. VA Call Centers and Hotlines will cease to function. The VA could also close educational and vocational counseling services.
- **Document delays.** The SSA will stop issuing Social Security cards, impacting 60,000 Americans daily. Passport offices will close. Americans may not be able to get a new Medicare card. The FHA will stop approving housing loan applications. SNAP benefits, though technically protected by mandatory funding programs, may not be issued if a shutdown goes beyond a month.
- **Gaps in food and water safety.** Many routine food inspections would stop. Nearly all of the EPA staff monitoring clean drinking water near hazardous waste sites would abruptly end. That means cancer-causing chemicals like PFAS might go unchecked in our drinking water.
- **Stalled infrastructure improvements.** Updating our electrical grid and improving broadband access for rural Americans would grind to a halt during a shutdown.

If House Republicans stuck to the spending deal they struck earlier this year, we wouldn't have a shutdown on our hands. Thanks to Speaker McCarthy's inability to control his caucus, American families and businesses will pay the cost.

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