



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2019

**No. 19-1
Mokie Porter
301-996-0901**

VVA, Veterans Organizations Stand United in Call to End Shutdown

(Washington, D.C.)—“Many veterans choose to continue to serve their country after life in the military by joining the federal workforce,” said John Rowan, president of Vietnam Veterans of America. “This is the first time in our nation’s history that members of the U.S. Armed Forces have not been paid during a lapse in appropriations. The idea that all 42,000 members of our Coast Guard are now working without pay is infuriating. We cannot sit idly by as the patriots who keep our country safe are denied a paycheck due to the shutdown, ostensibly in the name of national security.

Vietnam Veterans of America has joined with fellow veterans organizations in calling for an end to the government shutdown. Roughly a third of government employees are veterans; many of them are furloughed and now placed in a precarious financial position. Studies have shown that financial hardship is often correlated with increased suicide rates, so there is reason to be concerned that the shutdown could cause serious harm to the wellbeing of veterans in the federal workforce.

“Just a few months ago, the VA screwed up GI Bill payments for thousands of student veterans. The memory of the harm that a few missed checks can cause is fresh in our minds,” continued Rowan. “This is essentially the same problem but on a much larger scale. That’s why we can’t allow government employees to continue to live with so much financial insecurity.”

Rowan added, “Congress has confirmed that federal employees will be paid back pay, so we also call on landlords, banks, and other creditors to hold harmless these workers until they receive their pay and can make good on their debts.”