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Subject: Legion to Congress: Pay the Coast Guard!
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Legion to Congress: Pay the Coast Guard!

INDIANAPOLIS (January 8, 2019) American Legion National Commander Brett P. Reistad called upon Congress and the White House to immediately find a way to fund the Coast Guard's payroll and assure every member that they will be paid on time.

"Senator John Thune has introduced the 'Pay Our Coast Guard Act,'" Reistad said. "The American Legion supports its immediate passage or similar legislation which will guarantee that these heroes who guarantee our safety and security will be paid on time and not miss a single paycheck."

Reistad pointed out that his organization loudly objected to potential military pay stoppages during previous shutdowns and lawmakers found a way to guarantee that members of the other military branches would continue to be paid.

"The brave members of our Coast Guard risk their lives defending us daily, just like their sister services in the Department of Defense," Reistad said. "Just because a Washington flow chart structures the Coast Guard under Homeland Security does not mean they should not be paid. Whether they are performing rescues during a hurricane or stopping drug traffickers at sea, members of the Coast Guard regularly perform heroic and lifesaving tasks on our behalf. They should not have to worry about bills and living expenses just because Congress and the White House cannot agree on a budget."

Citing the Coast Guard's Semper Paratus motto, Reistad said that The American Legion is "always prepared" to support the men and women in uniform. "In the event that there is a delay in paying our Coast Guard, I have directed administrators of The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance program to stand by and quickly administer requests made by active-duty Coast Guard members with children who need help with living expenses. We also hope that local Coast Guard commanders can assist single members with housing expenses by providing on-base or ship-board billeting "

The American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Program has awarded grants to meet the shelter, medical and nutritional needs for the minor children of military personnel since 1925. It is funded by donations made to The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, <https://www.legion.org/donate>.

“As a nonprofit, The American Legion is not capable of funding the entire Coast Guard payroll,” Reistad said. “But we are hoping that Americans immediately demand that Congress and the White House pay the Coast Guard. Regardless, our TFA will be there to assist military parents in need. Any donations that people wish to make to the foundation will be especially appreciated at a time like this.”

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