

From: [Raughter, John B.](#)
To: [Public Relations Division](#)
Subject: Release: American Legion to Washington: "Pay the troops, without delay"
Date: Thursday, April 07, 2011 11:24:20 AM

American Legion to Washington: ‘Pay the troops, without delay’

Washington (April 7, 2011) – With a shutdown of the federal government imminent, The American Legion wants Congress and the White House to ensure that all active-duty service members will receive their full paychecks – uninterrupted and without delays.

“We know that Secretary Gates has promised our troops that they’ll keep getting paid if the government shuts down, but receiving it in the form of back pay is not good enough,” said Jimmie L. Foster, national commander of The American Legion. “The troops are either engaged in combat or supporting those who are. They don’t need to deal with this uncertainty.

“Thousands of our servicemembers and military families stand to suffer if they are shortchanged on their income for even one week. That could make the difference between paying a credit card bill on time or not,” Foster said. “And who will pay the late fees? Who will repair their damaged credit? We don’t think our elected leaders should allow it to go that far.”

Earlier today, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told troops in Baghdad they would continue to be paid if the government shut down, but the money would be withheld from their paychecks. He said, “If the government shutdown starts on the 8th and goes for a week, you’d get half a check.”

The American Legion is also calling on creditors and businesses to help all servicemembers who may experience pay problems because of the shutdown.

“We think the patriotic thing to do in wartime is to give our men and women in uniform a break on paying their bills,” Foster said. “Extend their payment due dates. Don’t foreclose on their homes. These are the people who risk their lives to defend America, whether its government is working or not. More importantly, it shouldn’t come to that. Congress should address this issue before it becomes a real problem for our servicemembers, and that is what The American Legion is requesting.”