

From: [March, Joseph H.](#)
To: [Public Relations Division](#)
Subject: Release: As government threatens to shut down, The American Legion reaches out to military families
Date: Friday, April 08, 2011 4:36:26 PM
Importance: High

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As government threatens to shut down, The American Legion reaches out to military families

WASHINGTON (April 8, 2011) - As the threat of a shutdown by the federal government looms, the nation's largest veterans service organization is offering support to military families who may suffer stress due to its effects.

If families of military personnel – especially those deployed overseas – are affected adversely by a government shutdown, they are encouraged to seek assistance from The American Legion's Family Support Network (FSN). FSN's function is explained on the program's web page at www.legion.org/familysupport. Electronic applications for help can be submitted immediately and 24/7 via a link on the page. The Family Support Network's phone center will be manned as of 8:00 a.m. Monday. "We are ready to help in any way we can," said Jimmie L. Foster, National Commander of The American Legion.

"Our Family Support Network cannot take the place of a paycheck," said Foster, "but we can help those families -- especially those with deployed loved ones -- take care of needs such as the provision of groceries, car repair, help with fix-it-up projects, advice and counsel, and perhaps, intercession with local businesses to extend payment terms and such. We are not the government," he continued, "but we are a good neighbor who can help some families get through this situation if it does happen."

To members of the armed forces, a government shutdown would mean that they would be issued promissory notes rather than paychecks while the work stoppage continues. "The problem is, an I.O.U. doesn't satisfy a mortgage company, or a utility company, a bank officer or even a grocery clerk," said Foster. "That's why we have strongly encouraged the Department of Defense to continue troops' pay uninterrupted. As I have said, 'The troops are either engaged in combat or supporting those who are. They don't need to deal with this uncertainty. We don't think our elected leaders should allow it to go that far.'"

As for military veterans and their families, the benefits and services offered to by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will remain, for the most part, unaffected by a government shutdown. However, some impact will be felt. The American Legion has posted a presentation by the VA on the subject at:

www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/99722/va-provides-answers-shutdown-concerns.

More information on The American Legion and its programs can be found at www.legion.org.

Media contact: Marty Callaghan, mcallaghan@legion.org or 202-263-5758/202-215-8644; Craig Roberts 202-263-2982; Cell 202-406-0887.