



November 14, 2025

To: Members of US Congress

From: Celina Stewart, CEO, League of Women Voters of the United States

Re: The League Urges Congress to Get Back to Work for the American People

The League of Women Voters of the United States (the “League”) writes to you about the end of the US government shutdown and next steps in budget negotiations. While the League is glad that the government and its critical services are operating, this record-long shutdown came at a steep cost to the people you are charged to serve. Millions of Americans were deprived of their paychecks and food access, and their elected leaders, who continued to get paid, still have not secured a solution to protect affordable health coverage. As you continue budget negotiations, the League urges you to allocate the necessary funding to meet the American people’s basic human needs, including health care, as well as people's access to democratic participation.

The nation is reeling from a historically long government shutdown, with devastating effects for millions of Americans who had to make impossible decisions to survive, and who are still going hungry. During the shutdown, more than one million federal employees’ paychecks were withheld, and millions of people with low incomes are still awaiting their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to afford food.¹ A prolonged shutdown also jeopardized public housing and housing choice vouchers (formerly Section 8).² While we are glad that Congress has allotted SNAP and WIC funding through the end of FY2026, we implore you to prioritize funding all of people’s basic human needs to which they are entitled, including food, housing, and other social services.

In the backdrop of this shutdown, 44 million people have been shopping for Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace plans and discovering exponentially higher premiums than last year.³ Expiration of the ACA enhanced premium tax credits will leave an estimated 4.8 million people uninsured in 2026, and millions of others with much higher expenses.⁴ Congress must address the soaring cost of insurance coverage and protect all Americans’ access to quality and affordable health care. The ACA has transformed coverage for millions of people by decreasing the uninsured population, limiting annual out-of-pocket costs, and protecting people with preexisting conditions.

As per our previous correspondence, in FY26, the League urges you to allocate sufficient funding to the constitutionally protected activities of voting and participation in the census. We urge you to allocate \$825 million in Election Security Grants to support state and local election officials, and at least \$1.6765 billion to the US Census Bureau in the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill, as was recommended by the House Appropriations Committee and requested by the Administration, to continue its current operations and prepare for the 2030 Census.⁵

The American people are hurting, and they know why: Government leaders have forced them to pay the price for their political games. This shutdown has had imminent and devastating consequences for millions of Americans, and their anxieties and uncertainty continue. Over the coming months, the League urges you to engage in good faith negotiations to ensure that the government remains open and focused on delivering for the people and the Constitution it serves.

¹ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/who-is-missing-paychecks-in-the-2025-shutdown-when-and-where/>;

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/key-statistics-and-research>

² <https://ruralhome.org/2024-2025-what-would-a-federal-government-shutdown-mean-for-rural-housing/>

³ <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/affordable-care-act-marketplace-and-medicaid-expansion-enrollment-reached-a-combined-44-million-in-2024/>

⁴ <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/48-million-people-will-lose-coverage-2026-if-enhanced-premium-tax-credits>

⁵ <https://civilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Coalition-Letter-Supporting-825M-in-Federal-Funding-for-Election-Administration-in-FY26.pdf>; <https://thecensusproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Census-Project-FY-2026-CJS-Sign-on-letter-FINAL10-30-25.pdf>