



BY TYLER MALLORY—THE WASHINGTON POST

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BY JUANA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

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Short-Term Relief, Long-Term Worry

Federal Employees Glad for Respite From Furlough, but They Fear for Job Security

By David Montgomery and Stephen Barr
Washington Post Staff Writers

Shutdown-shocked federal employees found temporary relief yesterday in the Republican effort to reopen the government, but that quickly was eclipsed by skepticism about the deal and fear that another shutdown might be just around the corner.

"The greatest frustration now is, even if they sign something that puts us back to work until January 26, we're all going to be furloughed again on the 26th," said Frank S.

Jannuzi, 31, a regional analyst for the State Department who was sent home at the beginning of the shutdown, then called back to work.

"I think it's just going to postpone everything," said Damian Evans, 27, who was not furloughed from his job in the personnel department of the FBI. "It's going to be language that's so obscure that both Congress and the White House will interpret things the way they want to interpret it, and it could come to a head again in a month or so."

Despite such skepticism, the interim legis-

lation, which the White House said President Clinton would sign, will provide short-term relief for federal workers. The 760,000 employees caught in the shutdown will have their back pay restored, and Office of Management and Budget Director John A. Koskinen said agencies will be encouraged to write the paychecks as soon as possible, probably next week.

The national parks, monuments and Smithsonian museums will be among the first agencies to reopen.

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Carmen Martinez, a State Department employee, has been on the job giving advice to diplomats overseas. She says it's been "rewarding."

WORKERS, From B1

Government agencies spent most of yesterday in varying stages of confusion as they waited for Congress to approve the back-to-work bill and for the White House to explain how it would affect their programs. The bill would provide full funding for some programs and reduced or no money for others.

"You really cannot imagine how Alice in Wonderland this is. It is the most unreal situation I think the government's ever had itself in," Commerce Undersecretary Mary L. Good said at a luncheon with Washington Post editors and reporters.

The GOP bill will provide money to pay everyone, but some employees may not be

able to do anything meaningful in the office. Those who manage programs or award grants and contracts at some agencies will not have the money to do their work.

"There is a possibility that the worst stereotype image of federal employees will occur—being paid and not producing. But they won't be producing because Congress has not given them the tools," National Treasury Employees Union President Robert M. Tobias said.

Some administration officials and employees also worried that the next two weeks will serve only as a respite from congressional efforts to terminate programs and jobs. "We have a horrible suspicion that they're in the process of trying to dismantle the Commerce Department via this mechanism since they

couldn't do it by the regular legislative mechanism," Good said.

In the pin-drop quiet Herbert Clark Hoover Commerce building at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Marcellina Missouri, 33, said the "on-again, off-again battle" between the president and Congress has left her with a "sense of hurt faith in government."

"I'm crossing my fingers, hoping it will come out well today," said the Commerce employee. The partial shutdown forced Missouri to postpone registering for classes to complete her accounting degree this semester. Looking up at the intricately carved wood ceiling of the building's first floor, she said, "I would like for it to be over."

"I have no more faith in Congress or the president," said Karen Hicks, 32, who works at the State Department. "You try to keep your hopes up, but every day there is no progress. I've just decided to wait and see."

As news of the potential budget deal reached the National Zoo, Norman the sea lion was posed dramatically on a rock at the usual time for the feeding and training show—only there were no visitors to see. Zoo officials said he probably would not have an audience before tomorrow, the earliest the zoo could open its doors, though educa-

tional displays and concessions probably wouldn't be operational until early next week.

"It's not the best," animal keeper Joann Sordellini said of the budget deal as she fed herring to the gray seals. "I'm just afraid this [shutdown] is going to happen again."

At the Department of Veterans Affairs, a handful of senior-level employees arriving for work yesterday said they were relieved to hear the shutdown was ending and their staffs would be returning—at least for now.

"Personally, I think there was some justification for the shutdown. It seems to be the only way anyone would pay attention to the balanced budget, but I hate to see it come at the expense of federal employees," said Bill Gilfillan, 46, a VA finance administrator from Columbia. With his own office staff cut in half, he said, "we were able to do very little. You can't deal with people who aren't there."

The furloughed employees have to catch up on three weeks of missed work: everything from mountains of mail and postponed projects to resuming trash pickups at the monuments around the Mall.

"It's impossible for me to ever go back and pick up what's been lost in terms of information that's been coming over the last couple weeks," said Jannuzi, who follows events for the State Department in East Asia. "Momentum has been lost. . . . Advancing our foreign policy interests is not something you can just catch up with on Monday."

The shutdown has cost about 11.2 million hours of lost work each week, the Office of Personnel Management said yesterday. That amounts to about \$45 million a day in wages for the furloughed workers.

Despite the uncertainties and hardships of the shutdown, some of those required to work also faced new challenges.

For Carmen Martinez, 45, a State Department employee, the partial government shutdown has been "one of the most rewarding experiences" of her professional career. She and fellow "emergency" colleagues in her C Street NW office have been taking turns phoning U.S. diplomats in overseas posts, giving them advice and soothing them.

"Just to keep in touch with people," she said. "The people overseas really need infor-

mation. They say, 'Golly! Someone is actually there!' They've just been so glad to hear a voice on the end of the line."

Yesterday, as a deal was cobbled together in Congress, Martinez placed a call to Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, Africa, to bolster Americans there, then checked in with another family in Australia.

"The ones in Australia had just moved out of their house to transfer home permanently," Martinez said, but were stranded by the funding crisis. With Martinez's help, they found another place to stay, to wait out the ordeal.

"I don't think people realize what an important moment in U.S. history this is," said Bill Maxwell, 35, pausing in the State Department's flag-lined hall. "I think a balanced budget is worth it," the diplomatic security specialist said. "I sympathize with myself and other federal employees, but I have a 3-year-old son, and I care about his future."

Staff writers D'Vera Cohn, Pamela Constable and Marianne Kyriakos contributed to this report.