THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 1, 2013

To the dedicated and hard-working employees of the United States Government:

The Federal Government is America's largest employer, with more than 2 million civilian workers and 1.4 million active duty military who serve in all 50 States and around the world.

But Congress has failed to meet its responsibility to pass a budget before the fiscal year that begins today. And that means much of our Government must shut down effective today.

I want you to know that I will keep working to get Congress to reopen the Government, restart vital services that the American people depend on, and allow public servants who have been sent home to return to work. At my direction, your agencies should have reached out to you by now about what a shutdown means for you and your families.

Today, I wanted to take a moment to tell you what you mean to me—and to our country.

That begins by saying thank you for the work you do every day—work that is vitally important to our national security and to American families' economic security. You defend our country overseas and ensure that our troops receive the benefits they deserve when they come home. You guard our borders and protect our civil rights. You help small businesses expand and gain new footholds in overseas markets. You guide hundreds of thousands of people each day through the glory of America's national parks and monuments, from Yosemite to the Statue of Liberty. And much more.

You do all this in a political climate that, too often in recent years, has treated you like a punching bag. You have endured three years of a Federal pay freeze, harmful sequester cuts, and now, a shutdown of our Government. And yet, you persevere, continuing to serve the American people with passion, professionalism, and skill.

None of this is fair to you. And should it continue, it will make it more difficult to keep attracting the kind of driven, patriotic, idealistic Americans to public service that our citizens deserve and that our system of self-government demands.

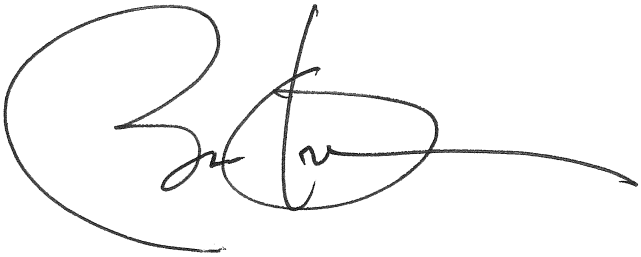
Public service is noble. Public service is important. And by choosing public service, you carry on a proud tradition at the heart of some of this country's greatest and most lasting achievements. In fact, more than 50 current or former Federal employees have received the Nobel Prize for their efforts. It was grants from the Department of Energy that helped businesses unlock new sources of renewable energy, and from the National Science Foundation that helped

entrepreneurs like the founders of Google change the world. It is your efforts that will help this country meet the great challenge of our time—rebuilding an economy where all who work hard can get ahead.

So while the budget fights in Washington are too often partisan, your service to the country must never be. As one of my predecessors, President George H.W. Bush, once said, "There is nothing more fulfilling than to serve your country and your fellow citizens and to do it well. And that is what our system of self-government depends on."

This shutdown was completely preventable. It should not have happened. And the House of Representatives can end it as soon as it follows the Senate's lead, and funds your work in the United States Government without trying to attach highly controversial and partisan measures in the process.

Hopefully, we will resolve this quickly. In the meantime, I want you to know—whether you are a young person who just joined public service because you want to make a difference, or a career employee who has dedicated your life to that pursuit—you and your families remain at the front of my mind. Your agency leaders and I will continue to defend your work at a time when that work has rarely been more important. We will continue to work with your agencies to keep you and your families apprised and informed of what is happening. And I will continue to do everything in my power to get the House of Representatives to allow our Government to reopen as quickly as possible, and make sure you receive the pay that you have earned.

Thank you, again, for your service, your sacrifice, and everything you do every day for this country we love so much.

Sincerely,