

## Government shutdown begins and lawmakers start finger-pointing (fifth and sixth period)

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The federal government shut down at the stroke of midnight Friday, January 19, because lawmakers could not agree on a federal budget. The federal budget funds the government and its many programs. This means only the most essential operations of government will continue until a budget is passed by Congress. The shutdown occurs on the one-year anniversary of President Donald Trump's inauguration.

### What Happens During A Shutdown?

Last-minute negotiations predictably crumbled. It was expected that the Senate would vote against a temporary budget that would have kept the government running for four more weeks. This breakdown caused the fourth government shutdown in 25 years. Since the shutdown began at the start of a weekend when many government offices close, much of the immediate effects will happen quietly for most Americans.

Still, the shutdown is an embarrassment for the president and a political risk for both parties. Congressional elections are coming in November, and 33 senators and 435 representatives will be up for election. Both parties believe voters will punish the other for failing to keep the government running.

Social Security and most other programs that help the country's highest need populations will not be affected by the **closure**. Critical government functions will continue, too. Uniformed service members, health inspectors and law enforcement officers are set to work without pay.

If no deal is reached before Monday, however, hundreds of thousands of federal employees will be **furloughed**. This means they will be temporarily unable to work.

### Democrats, Republicans Unwilling To Compromise

The Senate had until midnight to reach a deal on a budget. The House of Representatives had already passed a version that would allow the government to continue operating for four more weeks. Still, as midnight passed and the calendar turned, there was no obvious way to continue. Each party was unwilling to compromise.

Democrats voted against the temporary budget measure to keep the pressure on the White House to reach a deal that would protect "Dreamers." The "Dreamers" are immigrants who came to the country without permission as children. They are protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The program, which was started by President Barack Obama, allows "Dreamers" to live and work in the United States. The Trump administration will let the program run out in March, leaving the fate of 700,000 "Dreamers" up in the air.

### Immigration A Critical Issue For Budget

Predictably, both parties moved swiftly to blame one another for the government shutdown. Democrats laid fault with Republicans, who control both Congress and Senate chambers, and the White House. Republicans argued that Democrats were harming fellow Americans to protect "illegal immigrants," referring to those in the DACA program.

Trump said on Twitter Democrats "could have easily made a deal but decided to play Shutdown politics instead." In a series of tweets hours after the shutdown began, the president tried to make the case for Americans to elect more Republicans to Congress in November "in order to power through this mess." He noted that there are 51 Republicans in the 100-member Senate, and it often takes 60 votes to advance legislation.

**Reinforcing** the president's position, White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said Saturday, January 20, that Trump will not discuss immigration policy until the shutdown ends.

Trump had brought Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer to the White House Friday afternoon in hopes of cutting a deal. The two New Yorkers came out without an agreement.

## Trump's Opinion Has Shifted

Even before the vote, Trump was not hopeful. He tweeted, "Not looking good." He blamed the Democrats who he said actually wanted the shutdown "to help diminish the success" of the tax bill he and fellow Republicans pushed through last month. The bill **granted** large tax cuts to corporations and very wealthy individuals with the goal of stimulating the economy.

Trump had been an unreliable negotiator in the weeks leading up to the showdown. Earlier in the week he tweeted opposition to the four-week plan. The White House later communicated Trump's support for that plan. He had also expressed openness to extending DACA. Although, he rejected a proposal that both parties agreed on. His hateful and insulting remarks about African and Haitian immigrants last week helped derail further negotiations.

"We can't keep kicking the can down the road," said Schumer, insisting on more urgency in talks on immigration. "In another month, we'll be right back here, at this moment, with the same web of problems at our feet, in no better position to solve them."

## The Last Shutdown Was In 2013

Before Thursday night's House approval, Republican leaders tried to sweeten the temporary spending bill. They offered to extend a popular health care program for low-income children. They would also allow "Obamacare" taxes popular with Democrats to go on for two more years.

This shutdown is the first since 2013. In that year, tea party Republicans tried to use a must-pass funding bill to force then-President Obama to delay putting his health care law into effect. This is similar to what Schumer and Democrats are doing now. At that time, with Obama as the president, Trump told Fox & Friends that the ultimate blame for a shutdown lies at the top. "I really think the pressure is on the president," he said.

## Questions

- Which of the following MOST influenced the government shutdown?
  - President Trump's meeting Friday afternoon with Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer
  - disagreement between Democratic and Republican lawmakers over the budget and immigration legislation
  - pressure from Democratic and Republican voters in anticipation of this year's upcoming elections
  - disagreement between Congress and President Trump over programs that help high-need populations
- How will the government shutdown affect federal employees and recipients of federal programs?
  - All federal employees will be required to take leaves of absence without pay until the government is running again; all recipients of federal aid will continue to receive services.
  - Most federal employees will continue to work and receive payment throughout the shutdown; federal programs that provide aid to high-need populations have been temporarily suspended.
  - Some federal employees will continue to work without pay while others may be temporarily unable to work; the shutdown will not affect recipients of most programs that provide aid to high-need populations.
  - No federal employees will be able to work or receive any compensation throughout the government shutdown; recipients of programs that provide federal aid will not receive assistance during the shutdown.
- Republicans believe Democrats are responsible for the government shutdown after attempting to pressure the White House to address certain legislation. Which of the following BEST explains HOW the Democrats' perspective is different?
  - Democrats believe Republicans are responsible for the shutdown because they control both chambers of Congress as well as the White House.
  - Democrats believe Republicans are responsible for the shutdown because they did not propose a permanent budget to vote on.
  - Democrats believe Republicans are responsible for the shutdown because Trump tweeted about the possibility of a shutdown.
  - Democrats believe Republicans are responsible for the shutdown because Trump met with Chuck Schumer just before the shutdown occurred.
- HOW does the author show an inconsistency in Trump's arguments leading up to the government shutdown?
  - by explaining that he refuses to discuss immigration policies until after the shutdown ends
  - by explaining that he knew about the possibility of a government shutdown before it actually went into effect
  - by explaining that he tweeted conflicting statements about which party was most responsible for the government shutdown
  - by explaining that his tweets contradicted the White House's statement about the president's position on budget legislation

