

American Legion and US Coast Guard

As we enter our fourth week of the government shutdown, which I call the Trump shutdown. I call it that because on 11 December he said that it would be his shutdown and he would own it. About 800,000 government workers are feeling the effects. Less than half are on unpaid leave, while the remainder of those employees are working without pay — including more than 42,000 members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard's finances, which are funded through the Department of Homeland Security, falls under one of numerous government agencies that's been forced into shutdown. Fortunately, Congress is talking about legislation that would pay Coast Guard service members even if the budget stalemate continues. Of course, the president has threatened to veto any end of the shutdown unless he gets money to pay for his wall; the one Mexico was to pay. As most of us remember from our military days, we lived payday to payday for most of our time. We did not have a cushion of months of finances for our daily expenses. I remember some of my fellow airmen who would be broke a few days after payday. Many of our Veterans also do not have months of finances in savings accounts and live payday to payday.

As the shutdown continues and our Coast Guard goes longer without pay, the American Legion stood up to help with its Veterans and Children Foundation which provides direct monetary grants to veterans and military personnel with minor children that cover the costs of housing, food, utilities, clothing and medical expenses in times of financial hardship. I am proud to be a member of the American Legion. I recently joined the Sons of the Legion based on my father's service and eligibility. The Sons of the Legion is for male descendants of Veterans who are or were eligible to join the Legion. If a father or grandfather is or was eligible, his sons and grandsons qualify. Anyone out there fitting this criteria should consider joining. Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion are eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary. I encourage donations to the Veterans and Children Foundation.

Most people do not know anything about the Coast Guard, so here is a quick lesson. The Coast Guard was created by Congress on 4 August 1790 requested by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton. The mission of the Guard, as listed on their website, is to provide security at our ports, waterways and coasts, drug interdiction, aids to navigation, search and rescue, protect living marine resources, marine safety, defense readiness, migrant interdiction, maritime environment protection, polar, ice and Alaska operations and law enforcement. The Coast Guard has an excellent record of stopping drugs from entering the US. For instance, in November 2018, the Coast Guard seized over 16 tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of more than \$500 million. Why this military service is unfunded is beyond me.