

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

April 7, 2011

Dear Colleague,

Every passing hour, the looming possibility of a government shutdown becomes more real. The truth is, a shutdown may disrupt vital government services that matter to our servicemembers, children, seniors, veterans and all American families.

The fact is, the American people elected us to do a job – a job that means we must work together and not allow ideology or partisanship to needlessly divide us and prevent us from reaching a commonsense agreement.

While millions of American families will be impacted by a government shutdown—whether they are serving our country’s military, whether someone in their family is furloughed or whether they are unable to use critical government services – elected officials are the one group who will not be impacted. Just the opposite, in fact: we still get paid.

How does that make any sense?

That is why, if the government shuts down, I will take this pledge, and I urge you all – from the President and Vice President to all Members of Congress – to take it with me:

I will forego my federal salary until we reach an agreement. I will donate my salary to charity or return it to the Treasury until the government works again.

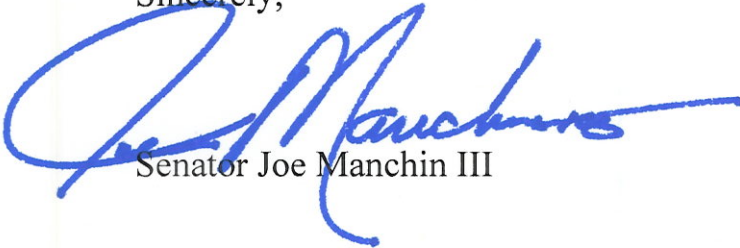
In the Senate, we tried to make this commonsense measure the law of our country, and we unanimously passed legislation from Senators Boxer and Casey to prevent lawmakers and the President from drawing a salary if the government shuts down. Unfortunately, that legislation is going nowhere in the House.

The bottom line is this: I can't imagine that the President, Vice President or any Member of Congress – Republican or Democrat – thinks they should get paid when the government has shut down.

Finally, some in Washington will deride this as an empty gesture. To those naysayers, I say that the American people expect more of us. They expect us to lead by example and share their pain until a budget resolution is reached that reflects our values and priorities as a country.

Again, I urge you to send the American people the right message and join with me to sign the "No Budget, No Pay" Pledge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Senator Joe Manchin III