

# **Colorado Faith Leaders Call on Colorado's Congressional Delegation to End the Partial Federal Government Shutdown**

January 23, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

**Adrian Miller**

**Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches**

**(303) 825-4910**

To:

The Honorable Michael Bennet, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Cory Gardner, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Ken Buck, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Jason Crow, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Diana DeGette, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Doug Lamborn, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Joe Neguse, U.S. Representative

The Honorable Scott Tipton, U.S. Representative

The partial, federal government shutdown--now the longest in U.S. history--continues to take an unnecessary and formidable toll on Coloradans. As Christian denominational leaders, clergy and religious professionals living together in Colorado, we stand united in support of the foundational value that a just and compassionate society requires an adequately funded and functioning government. We call on our state's Congressional delegation to work with their colleagues to find a compromise that will end the shutdown as soon as possible.

The Colorado Council of Churches understands that border security is an important public policy concern. Yet, border security is just one aspect of comprehensive immigration reform. We affirm that asylum-seekers have legal status, and that our country is morally and legally obligated to address their needs according to international law. We support policies that recognize the humanity and value of everyone within our borders, whether or not they are here

legally, as well as those who seek refuge here for economic or political reasons. As Christians, the call to treat one another with hospitality and compassion is primary, especially when someone is a “stranger.” The complexity of border security demands a full legislative debate that is separate from the budgeting process that funds the basic and essential functions of our federal government.

The failure to separate these issues has caused, and continues to cause, tremendous suffering. Federal employees are working without pay. Low-income families are not getting much-needed assistance to meet their basic needs. Now, thousands of families must choose which bills they can pay, wonder how they can afford food and medicine, and fret over how much longer they’ll be able to stay in their homes. God’s creation is being affected as well with trash piling up and vandalism occurring in our scenic national parks due to a lack of staffing.

Fortunately, the faith community, state and local government officials, businesses and private citizens have rallied to support those who needlessly struggle. However, such efforts are not sustainable. We must do better for Colorado, and our nation.

We’re very pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives has successfully passed legislation to fund the government, and that U.S. Senators Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner have called on President Trump to end the shutdown. Yet, things remain at a procedural impasse. We need leadership from both Democrats and Republicans to forge a compromise to fund the federal government and separately debate border security. This compromise should be presented to President Trump for approval. If President Trump fails to approve the compromise, Congress should override the president’s veto, and fund the government.

Creating and maintaining a compassionate society requires leadership. We prayerfully request that our political leaders end this shutdown as soon as possible, and get much needed relief to people in need.

Signed,

The Colorado Council of Churches

**Rev. Sue Artt**, Conference Minister, Rocky Mountain Conference, United Church of Christ

**Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes**, Executive Regional Minister, Central Rocky Mountain Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**Presiding Elder Anthony Hill**, Kansas District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

**Bishop Jim Gonia**, Rocky Mountain Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Rev. Michael J. Nicosia**, Vicar to the Rocky Mountain Region of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

**Bishop Karen Oliveto**, Mountain Sky Conference, United Methodist Church

**The Right Reverend Robert O'Neill**, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

**Rev. Vickie Samland**, Western Plains District Representative, Church of the Brethren

**Rev. Olivia Hudson Smith**, J.D., Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Denver

**Adrian Miller**, Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches