

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0102

October 4, 2013

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I urge your Administration to exercise its legal authority under H.R. 3210 to prevent work stoppages at major defense manufacturing facilities that are currently acting in support of the United States Armed Services.

According to news reports, defense contractors around the country are now facing the potential of significant furloughs due to interruptions caused by the current lapse of federal appropriations. Specific to my district, Sikorsky will soon furlough approximately 500 employees at its Troy, Alabama, facility. Workers at the Troy plant manufacture critical parts for MH-60R/60S Seahawk helicopters that are used by the U.S. Navy. The workflow interruptions are directly attributable to the absence of Defense Contract Management Agency inspectors who are required to examine manufactured parts throughout the production process.

This potentially dangerous interruption in production is unnecessary and avoidable under current law. As you know, Congress approved H.R. 3210, the Pay Our Military Act, on September 29, 2013. You signed the legislation into law the following day. Despite the ongoing government shutdown, Sec. 2(a)(2) of H.R. 3210 provides for the appropriation of:

“such sums as are necessary to provide pay and allowances to the civilian personnel of the Department of Defense (and the Department of Homeland Security in the case of the Coast Guard) whom the Secretary concerned determines are providing support to members of the Armed Forces described in paragraph (1).”

Sec. 2(a)(3) provides for the appropriation of:

“such sums as are necessary to provide pay and allowances to contractors of the Department of Defense (and the Department of Homeland Security in the case of the Coast Guard) whom the Secretary concerned determines are providing support to members of the Armed Forces described in paragraph (1).”

These provisions clearly authorize continued appropriations to pay those civilian personnel and fund those contractual activities that the Secretary of Defense determines are supporting our military. Certainly, the manufacture of military

helicopters for the Navy qualifies. Given the authority granted in H.R. 3210, it is appropriate for the Department of Defense to take such steps as necessary to prevent interruptions in production at this and other facilities.

I believe that the public elects its leaders to govern, and that a shutdown of federal operations represents a failure of governance. Though I steadfastly oppose the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and have voted numerous times to repeal or delay it, I have also repeatedly stated on the record that I do not believe that a government shutdown is the best way to deal with this problem. I am hopeful that a solution can be quickly found, and I urge leaders from both sides to come to the negotiating table without delay.

Until that occurs, I hope your Administration will use every authority under the law to reduce the impact of the shutdown on our national defense. Failure to do so will weaken our military and unnecessarily put many Americans out of work.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martha Roby
Member of Congress