The Phyllis Schlafly Report

**Shut It Down, Already!**

By John and Andy Schlafly

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Both the Right and Left seem fine with a government shutdown, so let the drama unfold. Republicans in Congress have proposed a clean funding bill that continues the Biden-era spending levels through November with no additional expenditures, while Democrats demand far more.

With Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) retiring next year and no longer acting as a Senate leader, his Chicken Little predictions of political disaster for Republicans from a shutdown ring hollow. Many in MAGA supported the reelection of Trump for the purpose of shutting down the government, and this appears to have been the primary goal of mega-donor Elon Musk.

Liberals use false spin for their benefit by insisting that a shutdown always hurts the Republican Party the most. The Republican Congress shut down the government for 21 days in late 1995 through early 1996, and in fact gained two Senate seats in the subsequent election, despite the Democrat Clinton prevailing over the weak Republican nominee Bob Dole at the top of the ticket.

Clinton failed to garner a majority in the popular vote after that shutdown, and Republicans held onto their majority in the House of Representatives. Republicans also maintained their large majority in state governorships, without any net loss.

Google AI says that Republicans received most of the blame for that 1995-96 shutdown but, even if true, that was decades before MAGA and the growing public opinion that the federal government needs to be shut down. The federal debt at the end of the 1995 fiscal year was only $5 trillion, while today it is grotesquely more than 7 times that amount, at a monstrous $37.5 trillion.

Public contempt for the federal government and officials in Congress is sky high. The leadership of both political parties on Capitol Hill has disapproval ratings greater than their approval ratings, in another indication that the American public would be just fine with unplugging their lavish salaries and benefits.

A recent Gallup poll found that only 23% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the federal government, while 61% have a negative view. These approval and disapproval ratings are worse than those of every other sector, including pharmaceuticals, oil, and utilities.

The federal government is plainly broken in many other ways, too. Federal workers are almost unanimously anti-Trump, and their one-sided verdicts against Trump supporters in court cases in D.C. have been appalling.

Foreign aid has continued to flow to prop up regimes in faraway lands and to fund warfare. Trump has taken laudable steps to end USAID and other foreign spending that spreads liberal harm around the world, but shutting down the federal government may be the only foolproof way to end this.

Eight months into the Trump Administration, many in MAGA conclude that it is impossible to clean house in the Swamp. Shutting down the federal government is the only viable way to end injustices wrought by the Feds.

Democrat leaders in Congress may be supporting a shutdown to appease their base of the far Left. Zohran Mamdani, a self-described socialist, is leading by a landslide in the polling for the next New York City mayor to be elected in five weeks.

Progressives complained loudly and bitterly about the Democrat leadership who agreed to the Republican bill last March to continue federal spending, because it led to trimming Medicaid funding. Progressives indicate that they may challenge the Democrat establishment next year based on their capitulation to Trump.

Meanwhile Trump's brilliant Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, has devised a clever plan to lay off much of the federal workforce permanently, in what is called a reduction in force (RIF), if Democrats force a shutdown. Democrats are squawking because these federal workers are overwhelmingly anti-Trump, but this has not yet caused the Dems to budge on their unreasonable demands.

Liberals fulminate about how it is unprecedented to conduct RIFs during a government shutdown, but this ingenious approach is likely to succeed. While federal agencies have not traditionally implemented RIFs during shutdowns, the law is clear that they have the discretion to do this if they abide by the rules as Vought is explaining to them.

Democrats can keep the government open by enacting a clean funding bill, but instead insist that Republicans provide free health care to migrants whom Biden wrongly reclassified as "lawfully present." Trump properly revoked that special status, which appropriately renders

them ineligible for free health care, and Republicans are right to protect Americans against the medical costs of illegal aliens.

Given the 60-vote threshold in the Senate, eight Democrats must join the Republicans to keep the federal government going. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) has vowed to vote Nay because the spending is too high under the Republican bill, even without tacking on the additional Democrat spending demands.

*John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.*