



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator Sanders Launches Collection Drive To Aid Federal Workers Affected by the Government Shutdown

[James Sanders Jr.](#)

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Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) today announced that he is collecting food and other essential items to help federal workers affected by the partial shutdown of the U.S. Government.

"These hardworking men and women who serve our nation should not be punished, or left struggling to support themselves and their families over Trump's feud with Congress," Sanders said. "We should all do our part to help these federal workers during their time of need."

Senator Sanders' collection drive is being conducted with support from the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) the largest federal employee union - representing 700,000 federal and D.C. government workers nationwide and overseas, and the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483, which operates a local food pantry.

Shortly after launching the collection drive, Senator Sanders received his first donations, and they came from former Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder on behalf of Cross River Bank, the company for whom he now serves as SVP of Public Affairs. "We appreciate this generosity," Sanders said. "Our collection drive is off to a good start."

The government shutdown started on December 22, 2018 over an inability for congressional Democrats to agree on funding President Trump's proposed wall along the U.S. - Mexico border. It is unclear how long this stalemate will continue but in the meantime, 800,000 federal employees are working without pay or on furlough.

"They can't count on their boss, the President, to do anything for them, so they are forced to become dependent on the kindness of strangers," said Gabriel Pedreira, Legislative Director and Political Organizer for the AFGE. "I am glad to see that here in Rosedale, Senator Sanders and the American Legion have opened their hearts to these workers and opened their doors to these workers and are allowing them and their families to get some free food when they need it."

Those affected by the government shutdown include agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

(CBP), as well as staff from the State Department, Coast Guard, IRS, Department of Homeland Security, NASA, the State Department, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Transportation Department, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the IRS.

“We don’t know these people, but they are not strangers to us,” Senator Sanders said. “These are our neighbors. These are very proud people who are usually the ones giving to the food pantries. They are not used to coming and receiving from the food pantries. To the workers, I say, the shame is not yours. You need to come out. Don’t sit in your home hungry.”

In the New York City area, the AFGE has over 10,000 members, and of those, 6,000 are not receiving paychecks due to the government shutdown, according to Timothy McLaughlin, National Representative of the 2nd District of the AFGE. He said these members speak to him on a daily basis about their anger, desperation and confusion over their current predicament.

“It’s absolutely despicable to have people work and not pay them,” McLaughlin said.

Senator Sanders is collecting donations of non-perishable food, toiletries along with baby formula, diapers, and other childcare items for these affected workers. Items can be dropped off at his District Office, located at 142-01 Rockaway Boulevard in South Ozone Park, Monday – Friday, between 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Those seeking to receive items must present a valid, current, federal ID from one of the agencies affected by the government shutdown.

While Senator Sanders is in the process of collecting items, those with immediate needs can visit the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483, which operates a food pantry on Wednesdays from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. It is located at 240-08 135th Avenue in Rosedale, Queens.

“We not only assist veterans, we assist active military members, but more importantly we assist the community, because we are a part of the community,” said William McDonald, Commander of the Rosedale-Laurelton American Legion Post 483. “If you are in need, our doors are open.”

For more information, contact Senator Sanders’ Office at 718-523-3069.

Those in need can also find the location of their local food pantry or soup kitchen by visiting <https://www.foodbanknyc.org/get-help/>