



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Gabriella Perez, left, attends a rally for her grandfather, Ruben Vera Perez, who was detained by immigration agents in Astoria in December.

## End of shutdown leaves contract workers hanging

By JAY REEVES  
Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Federal employees are turning on office lights and computers and reopening national parks and museums for the first time in weeks, but others employed by government contractors face still more uncertainty over when they'll resume work or whether they'll ever be paid for time lost to the stalemate over President Donald Trump's border wall.

For the hundreds of thousands of people who work for private companies that support government, the future will be decided in part by how quickly federal agencies get running after the record 35-day shutdown, the

fine print of contracts and the kindness of strangers.

Michelle Oler of St. Louis resorted to online fundraising to pay bills while sidelined from her contracting job processing rural development claims for the Agriculture Department, and she's still unsure when she'll resume work or receive money to compensate for missed paychecks.

"The estimate of what I've lost financially due to the shutdown is upwards of \$3,500. The anxiety, sleeplessness and depression make it feel like much more," Oler said Sunday in an interview by email. Her GoFundMe page has brought in only \$50 so far.

Kevin Doyle, a father of three, estimated he's out

around \$5,000 from his contracting job as an encryption specialist at Laughlin Air Force Base on the Texas-Mexico border. He said he didn't sleep and lost weight during the shutdown as both the stress and the bills piled up.

Doyle said he will return to work today, but he starts a new job Friday with another company that he hopes will be more stable if talks fail over Trump's demand for money for a wall and another shutdown begins next month.

"We were scraping pennies and nickels together one day to get the baby a Happy Meal," said Doyle, 40. "It's just that bad."

The partial government shutdown ended when Trump

backed off his demand that Congress commit \$5.7 billion for a U.S.-Mexico border wall before federal agencies could resume work. All or parts of multiple federal agencies were affected, with some employees furloughed and others forced to work without pay.

The 800,000 federal workers who were affected will receive back pay, but contractors don't have the same guarantee.

Jack Lyons, who was furloughed from his contract job providing technical support at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in north Alabama, didn't miss a paycheck during the shutdown. "I was one of the lucky ones," he said.

## Trump doubts negotiators will strike budget deal he'd accept

By DEB RIECHMANN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said the odds congressional negotiators will craft a deal to end his border wall standoff with Congress are "less than 50-50."

As hundreds of thousands of furloughed federal workers prepared to return to work, Trump told The Wall Street Journal that he doesn't think the negotiators will strike a deal that he'd accept. He pledged to build a wall anyway using his executive powers to declare a national emergency if necessary.

"I personally think it's less than 50-50, but you have a lot of very good people on that board," Trump said in an interview Sunday with the newspaper.

The president was referring to a bipartisan committee of House and Senate

lawmakers that will consider border spending as part of the legislative process.

The president's standoff with Democrats on Capitol Hill is far from over and the clock is ticking. The spending bill Trump signed on Friday to temporarily end the partial government shutdown funds the shuttered agencies only until Feb. 15.

It's unclear if the Democrats will budge. Trump seemed girded for battle over the weekend, sending out a series of online messages that foreshadowed the upcoming fight with lawmakers. "BUILD A WALL & CRIME WILL FALL!" he tweeted.

Is Trump prepared to shut down the government again in three weeks?

"Yeah, I think he actually is," acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said. "He doesn't want to shut the government down,

let's make that very clear. He doesn't want to declare a national emergency."

But Mulvaney said that at "the end of the day, the president's commitment is to defend the nation and he will do it with or without Congress."

The linchpin in the standoff is Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion for his prized wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, a project Democrats consider an ineffective, wasteful monument to a ridiculous Trump campaign

promise.

Asked if he'd willing to accept less than \$5.7 billion to build a barrier on the southern border, Trump replied: "I doubt it." He added: "I have to do it right."

He also said he'd be wary of any proposed deal that exchanged funds for a wall for broad immigration reform. And when asked if he would agree to citizenship for immigrants who were illegally brought into the U.S. as children, he again replied, "I doubt it."

## Vigil held for man detained by ICE

Dozens gathered on Friday night

By BRENNNA VISSER  
The Daily Astorian

About 50 people with teddy bears, candles and American flags gathered at the Astoria Riverwalk on Friday in a vigil for Ruben Vera Perez, an Astoria man detained by immigration agents in December.

The vigil was organized by local activists and clergy to help raise money to support Perez's family while he's detained.

On Dec. 14, Ruben Perez appeared in Circuit Court downtown to handle a probation matter. Last year, Perez had been arrested and charged with drunken driving. Ruben Perez was detained by immigration agents while

his wife, Maria Perez, was driving him to the jail to check in with a pretrial release officer.

"I don't wish this feeling on anybody," Maria Perez said at the vigil with her daughter and granddaughter by her side.

A GoFundMe page is being circulated by Indivisible North Coast Oregon and a tamale fundraiser is being held by the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council to help the family pay bills while he's detained.

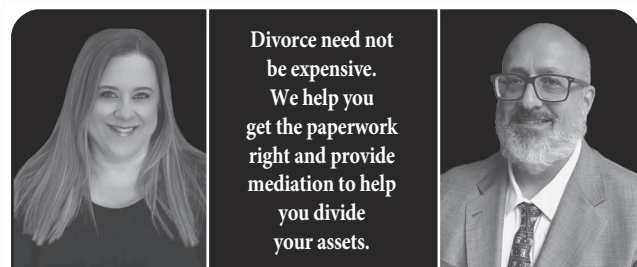
The teddy bears people brought to the vigil will be sent to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden in a call to bring attention to detention policies in the United States.

"There has to be a better way," said Kit Ketcham, a pastor at Pacific Unitarian Universalist. "We call for mercy, peace and hope."

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