

My name is Tamela Worthen and I work as a security officer at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

I missed several of my regular paychecks during the longest government shutdown in U.S. history — and I still can't afford my diabetes medication or my mortgage.

I was even rushed to the hospital because I could hardly breathe as a result of missing my medication.

I'm worried about keeping my home being so behind on my mortgage payments. I'm also behind on car notes, car insurance, and electricity bills.

I feel so overwhelmed by the pain of the shutdown and the stress of future funding lapses that I'm applying to new security jobs that wouldn't be impacted by another shutdown.

You can't really live your day to day life because you have to constantly think about what if this happens again.

You can't prepare for it — especially if you don't have any money in the first place.

I'm in the difficult position of saving as much as I can while simultaneously catching up on bills, debt payments, paying back unemployment benefits, and taking care of other financial issues from this last shutdown.

I burned through most or all of my emergency savings" to stay afloat.

It's very hard to get back on your feet like this. That's why I can't risk the possibility of another shutdown — whether that happens soon or in the future.

I need and deserve financial stability not having to be worry everyday about this whole shutdown mess.

Why should I pay the price for a shutdown I did not create? I work hard and follow the rules yet I'm being punished.

I hope and pray that Congress can at least make sure contractors get paid if there's another shutdown.