

# The Connecticut General Assembly



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## REP. CHRISTINE PALM HAILS HOUSE APPROVAL OF BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION

### *House Bill 5765 Makes Federal Workers Eligible for Unemployment Compensation and Interest-Free Loans*

**State Rep. Christine Palm (D-Chester, Deep River, Essex and Haddam)** today voted for legislation in the House which makes available unemployment assistance and interest-free loans of up to \$5,000 to federal workers. For over a month, many essential and non-essential federal employees have been reporting to work and performing their duties – without pay.

"I am very pleased to have been able to cast my first vote as a new state representative for a bi-partisan bill that will help Connecticut residents care for their families and meet their financial obligations," Palm said. "I am encouraged by the cooperation among the new Lamont administration, which came up with the initiative, some Connecticut-based banks, and legislators from both sides of the aisle. This program recognizes that the deplorable government shut-down results in real harm to working people who had nothing to do with the current administration's political posturing in Washington. I'm also pleased that the bill gives towns the authority to allow federal employees affected by the shutdown to delay paying certain bills and fees."

State Representative Robyn Porter (D-Hamden, New Haven) who chairs the Labor Committee said, "It is grossly unfair for these people to go to work every day and not receive compensation. Federal employees and their families are being singled out and forced to bear an unnecessary hardship thanks to the ongoing federal government shutdown. I am pleased that we took action to right this injustice by making these workers eligible for unemployment."

"These are our family, friends, and neighbors who by no fault of their own are being unfairly punished by a breakdown in Washington," Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz and House Majority Leader Matt Ritter said in a joint statement. "We

appreciate Governor Lamont, the Connecticut Bankers' Association, and the participating banks for finding a way to help those impacted by the shutdown.”

**House Bill 5765** does the following:

- Establishes a no-interest loan program under CHFA for federal employees who are not currently being paid because of the shutdown
- Allows that if the federal government changes federal rules regarding the unemployment insurance program, there will be a change to our state unemployment laws allowing the federal employees who are forced to work without being paid to be eligible for unemployment compensation
- Allows towns, with the approval of their legislative body, to allow federal employees affected by the shutdown to delay paying tax bills, sewer fees, etc.

The bill was approved in the House, 127-15, and in the Senate, 32-1. Gov. Lamont promptly signed the legislation.