

## Governor Cooper And NJ Governor Urge President To Fund SNAP For U.S. Coast Guard

By Administrator

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Governor Cooper and New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy today sent a letter to President Donald Trump, urging his administration to allow U.S. Coast Guard servicemembers to receive federal food assistance through a Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) fund. Due to the partial government shutdown, Coast Guard servicemembers have not been paid since December 31, 2018. “As governors of states that many of our nation’s maritime first responders call home, we write to you today to express our concerns for our U.S. Coast Guard’s servicemembers due to the federal government’s partial shutdown,” the governors wrote. “If this partisan gamesmanship must continue, we urge you to help our Coast Guard servicemembers avoid enduring any additional difficulty and pain by creating a separate fund that allows their families to receive federal food assistance through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).”

Cooper and Murphy emphasized that the federal government’s failure to provide Coast Guard servicemembers with paychecks on January 15, 2019, marks the first time in history that servicemembers in a U.S. Armed Force have not been paid during a lapse in government appropriations. The Governors urged President Trump to use his existing authority, current reserves, and any other means necessary to create a separate reserve fund for new SNAP cases.

While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has attempted to issue February’s SNAP benefits by allowing states to distribute those benefits in January, before a provision in the Continuing Resolution fully expires, states must process and issue next month’s applications and benefits this month. Coast Guard servicemembers, many of whom previously did not need food stamps assistance, have only missed their first paycheck and may not have known they would need SNAP assistance, meaning they may miss this window.

“Coast Guard members and their families are indispensable in protecting our state and nation’s shores. As we saw during Hurricane Florence last fall, these men and women respond when needed to save lives and keep our people safe. They deserve to be paid and deserve access to hot meals and healthy food. We must honor their service and sacrifice,” said Governor Cooper.

“Our brave servicemembers continue to patrol New Jersey’s coastline and protect our country without pay due to President Trump’s shameful shutdown,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “These families have sacrificed so much for us to enjoy our freedom. If President Trump’s shutdown must continue, he needs to provide assistance for those whose livelihood are hanging in the balance while he plays politics in Washington.”

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