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From: "Jarrett, Valerie" <valerie_jarrett@who.eop.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Business Groups Urge Congress to Reopen as Shutdown Drags On

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/10/us/politics/business-groups-urge-congress-to-reopen-as-shutdown-drags-on.html?hp&pagewanted=print>

October 9, 2013

Business Groups Urge Congress to Reopen as Shutdown Drags On

By JONATHAN WEISMAN and SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

WASHINGTON — House Republicans, facing the ninth day of a government shutdown, appeared increasingly isolated on Wednesday from even their strongest backers, with business groups demanding the immediate reopening of the government and benefactors such as Koch Industries publicly distancing themselves from the shutdown fight.

Republican and Democratic leaders met at noon to try to find a way forward, both on reopening the government and on raising the federal debt limit before the Treasury exhausts its ability to borrow on Oct. 17. Leading Republicans in the House appeared to be trying to move the stalemate away from efforts to defund President Obama's health care law to a broader discussion of fiscal policy.

In an opinion piece in Wednesday's Wall Street Journal, Representative Paul D. Ryan, Republican of Wisconsin and chairman of the House Budget Committee, proposed negotiating a continuing resolution to reopen the government with a focus on changes to entitlement programs like Medicare and a reshaping of the federal tax code. He did not mention the Affordable Care Act, which

Republicans had said must be defunded, delayed or damaged before the full government is to be reopened.

It was not clear whether conservative rank-and-file Republicans would go along with that redirection. But other voices usually allied with Republicans stepped up pleas for an end to the standoff. On Wednesday, the National Retail Federation joined other business groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers in asking House Republicans to relent.

"We strongly support passage of both a continuing resolution to provide for funding of the federal government into the next fiscal year and a measure to raise the nation's debt ceiling," the group's president, Matthew Shay said in a letter to Congress that highlighted economic indicators showing that the shutdown has already hurt consumer spending and depressed consumer confidence.

President Obama has planned a series of meetings with lawmakers. He is scheduled to meet this evening with House Democrats at the White House, and to meet separately later this week with House Republicans, Senate Republicans and Senate Democrats.

Meantime, Koch Industries accused Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader, on Wednesday of spreading "false information" about the Koch brothers by suggesting they were behind the move to end financing for President Obama's health care law and the partial shutdown of the federal government.

"Koch believes that Obamacare will increase deficits, lead to an overall lowering of the standard of health care and raise taxes," Philip Ellender, the company's chief spokesman, wrote in a letter to senators. "However, Koch has not taken a position on the legislative tactic of tying the continuing resolution to defunding Obamacare, nor have we lobbied on legislative programs defunding Obamacare."

In the House and Senate, lawmakers in both parties highlighted the effect of the shutdown on veterans programs and death benefits for the families of service members killed in action. House Republicans, who have already passed a piecemeal spending bill to reopen the Veterans Affairs Department, moved to vote Wednesday afternoon on a bill to finance death benefits.

But Senate Democrats remained insistent that they would accept nothing short of a full reopening of the government. Veterans suffering under the shutdown rely on a variety of programs, within the V.A. but also from the departments of labor and housing and urban development, they said.

"To run the government by cause du jour is simply not the way the government can function," said

Senator Jon Tester, Democrat of Montana.

At a House hearing on death benefits, Representative Tim Huelskamp, Republican of Kansas, asked Eric K. Shinseki, the secretary of veterans affairs, “Do you think Harry Reid doesn’t like the V.A. or our veterans?”

Mr. Shinseki, looking baffled, replied: “I think he highly values veterans. As to why Congress is unable to do its business, I will leave to the members to discuss.”

Representative Tim Walz, Democrat of Minnesota, called the question “beneath the dignity” of the veterans affairs committee and offered Mr. Huelskamp 30 seconds to apologize. He declined.

Jennifer Steinhauer contributed reporting.