

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett: Trump, Republicans Finally 'Come To Their Senses'

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, in a statement issued following President Donald Trump's signing of a spending bill to reopen the partially shuttered federal government for six weeks, lampooned President Trump and Republicans, stating that they finally came to their senses -- albeit late -- after millions of Americans suffered as a result of the 35-day shutdown.

"After the longest shut down in history, I am pleased that the government will reopen and federal employees will be paid. The solution to the Trump Shutdown has always been simple: reopen the government, pay federal employees, and then begin a period of constructive negotiations on border security. It is sad that it took 35 days of inflicting pain and misery on Americans for President Trump and Republicans to come to their senses and agree to this solution, but it is better late than never," the delegate to Congress wrote.

She added, "I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle and across the Capitol to craft a funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security that provides smart, effective solutions for border security while staying true to our values as Americans."

The spending bill alleviates the fears of damage a further protracted shutdown would cause to the Government of the Virgin Islands and its tens of thousands of people who rely on federal aid. For example, roughly 25,000 Virgin Islanders territory-wide depend on food stamps for meals.

Following Mr. Trump's signing of the bill, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi held a press conference with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, where she said her talk relative to a border wall has been clear. Even so, Democrats have spoken about increasing funding for alternative ways of protecting the border, which includes a mix of wall, smart technology including drones, and increased patrols. The rhetoric will help both the president and Democrats save face and move forward with protecting the border, as Mr. Trump recently endorsed the approach. "We do not need 2,000 miles of concrete wall from sea to shining sea — we never did," Mr. Trump has said.

The spending bill will also allow Mr. Trump to deliver his State of the Union Address, albeit not on the original Tuesday date.

"The State of the Union is not planned now," Ms. Pelosi said during the Friday press conference. "When government is open we will discuss a mutually agreeable date." Earlier this week Ms. Pelosi rescinded her invitation to the president to come to the House chamber until the government was reopened.

Analysis from ratings agency Standard & Poor's found that the United States economy lost at least \$6 billion in the five weeks the government was partly shuttered.