

Gearing Up for Possibility of Another Trump Shutdown, Airport Workers Ready Mass Protests in 80 Major Cities

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“We’re going to continue running as fast as we can right up to February 15, so that we can take action immediately on February 16 if necessary.”

With congressional negotiators still working on a deal to keep the federal government open after the current stopgap funding measure expires on Friday, Feb. 15, airport workers are [already planning mass protests](#) for next Saturday in case the government shuts down again.

Air traffic controllers and other airport employees were [widely credited](#) for creating the pressure that ended the longest shutdown in American history last month, and Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) president **Sara Nelson** [told](#) *New York Magazine* on Friday that workers are gearing up to mobilize if congressional negotiators fail to reach a deal—or if **President Donald Trump** unilaterally scuttles any agreement.

As *New York Magazine’s* Sarah Jones reported,

“Nelson says that the union will be out leafleting in airports in 80 major cities next week ahead of Saturday’s demonstrations.”

“We are also working very hard to get information out to all of our members about what’s at stake,” Nelson told *New York Magazine*. “We need people to fully understand what the issues are so that we can be prepared to respond potentially with withholding our service, if that’s what it takes to stop a continuation of the shutdown.”

According to Jones, the AFA is not alone in preparing to mobilize if the government shuts down again, once more putting the pay of hundreds of thousands of federal workers at risk:

Nelson cites the American Federation of Teachers as “a very strong ally” in addition to Unite Here, which represents many federal subcontractors who have still not received backpay for paychecks withheld during the shutdown. Reached by phone on Friday afternoon, Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, told *New York* that AFT is “very concerned” about the shutdown’s impact on both the aviation industry and its unions. “We are working together to do what is impossible to do alone,” she said.

As *Common Dreams* [reported](#), air traffic controller unions warned throughout the previous government shutdown that forcing airport employees to work without pay dramatically increases flight safety risks.

On the day the government shutdown ended last month, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) [halted flights](#) into New York's LaGuardia Airport, citing air traffic controller shortages caused by the shutdown.

[Speaking to In These Times](#) on Friday, Nelson—who [called for a general strike](#) during the previous funding lapse—emphasized how truly “dangerous” a continuation of the government shutdown would be.

“We’re going to continue running as fast as we can right up to February 15, so that we can take action immediately on February 16 if necessary,” Nelson said.

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