

**Statement of Barry Epstein, President
NASA Headquarters Professional Association, IFPTE Local 9
At the Rally to End the Government Shutdown
Washington, DC,
January 10, 2019**

I am a proud NASA engineer working to advance human exploration in space – to the Moon and Mars.

But let me correct that. I am a proud NASA engineer furloughed from working at NASA Headquarters.

I speak only for myself as a private citizen and as the President of NASA Headquarters Professional Association, IFPTE Local 9.

This Administration, and those who support this shutdown, are hurting our democratic institutions and the critical services we provide to citizens and the nation.

For example, this shutdown could end up impacting crew on the International Space Station. Projects we work on that impact the crew's health and well-being and their ability to conduct their mission are sitting idle at NASA Centers around the country. It may take months or years to get the countless new technologies and scientific research efforts that support all of NASA's mission back on track—while adding wasteful, unplanned costs to that recovery.

You've heard countless stories of individual federal employees that are suffering under this furlough. And that includes NASA scientists, engineers, analysts, and administrative professionals who enable exploration and discovery. And we also need to remember the contractors, and even those in the cafeterias and shops in and around our NASA offices that will never recover their lost wages.

But the greatest damage these shutdown enablers are causing is to Americans' belief in our nation's ability to do great things. We want to get back to work, back to our mission of exploration & discovery, for us and for future generations. Thank you.