

NBC's *Today*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Stalemate in DC as Government Shutdown Rolls on]

SHEINELLE JONES: Turning to the government shutdown now entering its third day. This morning, Congress is showing no signs of budging as federal workers brace for the possibility of going weeks without pay. With us to break it all down, Kristen Welker, moderator of *Meet the Press*. Kristen, good morning.

KRISTEN WELKER: Hi, Sheinelle, good morning to you.

JONES: You heard Craig's conversation with the Speaker of the House in our first half hour. What more do we know about the current status of the shutdown?

WELKER: Well, Sheinelle, you know, it is really fascinating, Craig's conversation with speaker Johnson underscored some of my big takeaways from conversations with Democrats and Republicans throughout the week, which is that there's just no end in sight, both sides are completely dug in and there are no real negotiations about a way out of this. The House speaker very clear with Craig, their strategy is to apply pressure to get Democrats to cave. Take a look at this poll. It shows the majority of people blame Republicans for the shutdown and nearly a quarter of respondents say they don't know who to blame. So, that could create potential vulnerability for Democrats if they lose the messaging war. Some Republicans now, it is important to point out, are getting jittery about the possibility of federal layoffs. Senator Kevin Cramer was quoted as saying this, Sheinelle: "We as Republicans have never had so much moral high ground on a government funding bill in our lives," but he also went on to say, "I just don't see why we would squander it." Really highlighting some of the concerns about overplaying their hand.

CRAIG MELVIN: Kristen, do we know how the shutdown is affecting folks outside the D.C. area so far? And what are we watching for over the next few days?

WELKER: Well, Craig, we know that 750,000 workers have already been furloughed. Millions more are working without pay. That's obviously a burden to individual families and local economies. A number of government services already being impacted. We were supposed to get a jobs report today, for example, that won't be released. But here's what we'll be watching for in the coming days. Could we start to see longer lines at food banks? Could food assistance programs be delayed? And remember back in 2019, the shutdown ended amid pressure from TSA workers who were working without pay. Many started calling out sick. Could Congress cave to that kind of pressure again? A lot to watch for.

JONES: Alright, Kristen, thanks. And we know you'll have much more on the shutdown Sunday on *Meet the Press*, including interviews with House Speaker Mike Johnson, House Minority

Leader Hakeem Jeffries, and Senator Adam Schiff.