

Timeline on HHS Bargaining

MAY 2018

President issues three executive orders attacking collective bargaining. Political appointees at HHS, after initially refusing to bargain with NTEU on a new contract, rush to the table.

JULY 2018

HHS and NTEU begin bargaining but it ends abruptly after HHS refuses to discuss its proposals. After one day of mediation, HHS submits its "last best offer" to eliminate 21 articles from the contract. HHS declares bargaining to be at an impasse even though the parties have only briefly discussed two of the 34 open articles.

MARCH 2019

NTEU has four national grievances pending against HHS, challenging the agency's illegal bargaining tactics and disregard for employee rights in nearly every step of the term bargaining process.

MAY 2019

HHS divisions SAMHSA, OASH, ACL, ACF, ASPR and Office of the Secretary announce cuts to telework, among other anti-employee policy changes.

SEPTEMBER 2019

HHS illegally restricts holiday leave for employees. Arbitrator rules that HHS bargained in bad faith. HHS is ordered to return to bargaining and the FSIP order is no longer valid. HHS appealed and continues to illegally implement the FSIP decision.

JUNE 2018

NTEU files a national grievance against HHS for forcing bargaining based on ground rules HHS previously stated were illegal. NTEU submits contract proposals, under protest. HHS, following the executive orders, proposes to strip away employee rights and benefits and restrict employee access to union representatives.

AUGUST 2018

HHS files a request for assistance with the FSIP. The Panel is currently stacked with anti-union appointees who have rubber-stamped agency decisions. NTEU files another grievance and delivers a petition to HHS headquarters signed by 5,500 employees protesting the agency's bad faith bargaining. HHS Secretary Azar refuses to meet with NTEU leadership.

APRIL 2019

FSIP sides with management and imposes contract articles that NTEU never agreed to. HHS informed NTEU it intends to implement the FSIP order, despite pending litigation challenging it, and the fact that the parties have not finished bargaining the rest of the agreement.

JULY 2019

After surveying more than 1,600 HHS employees, NTEU warns Secretary Azar that five out of six say cuts to telework could cause them to leave the agency. More than half said it would increase commute time and costs, and reduce productivity.

OCTOBER 2019

NTEU asks HHS secretary to return to the bargaining table. No response received.

HHS' implementation of the FSIP decision has been uneven: few changes in some operating divisions, while others quickly cut back on telework, adjusted work schedules, and other important employee benefits.

NTEU and HHS are still bargaining six articles in the contract that were not covered by the FSIP decision.

What can you do?

Employees standing in solidarity with each other will send a strong message to HHS. Expect future communications from NTEU about small but important actions you can take to help.

- If you are not already a member of NTEU, please join. Staying in the fight will require the resources that paid union membership provides.
- Ensure that NTEU has your personal email address.
- If you are already a member, please ask a coworker to join. The bigger we are, the stronger we get.
- Keep us informed of changes to your working conditions.