



July 15, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

The Honorable Michael Rigas
Acting Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Dear Acting Director Rigas:

I am writing to you on behalf of the 150,000 federal employees in 33 agencies and departments represented by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) to request that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) seek direction from the President to establish an Emergency Leave Transfer Program (ELTP) for federal employees adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), and to delegate to agencies the authority to establish their own programs.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared COVID-19 a national emergency, effective March 1, 2020. Many federal employees represented by NTEU are experiencing extreme difficulty managing childcare and other family care responsibilities during this pandemic. These hardships are particularly acute for parents who must pick up the educational slack for school-age children while working full-time during the pandemic. Flexible work schedules are insufficient for these employees to manage these competing demands because there simply aren't enough hours in the day to do so. That means they must use accrued annual leave. Yet, many employees in this situation have insufficient accrued annual leave to account for the time they must devote to family care or childcare and education.

Many federal employees represented by NTEU have expressed an interest in donating accrued annual leave to their colleagues who need additional paid time off from work to balance family responsibilities because of the pandemic. But they are unable to do so because agencies' voluntary leave transfer and leave bank programs are limited to medical emergencies. By establishing or authorizing federal agencies to establish an emergency leave transfer program, the administration would help alleviate the burdens on federal employees caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, OPM has exercised its authority to authorize ELTPs during declared national emergencies in the past, including during Hurricane Dorian in 2019, Hurricanes Florence and Michael in 2018. The current pandemic is no less an emergency than these, but longer lasting and on a national scale.

Thank you for the consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President