

HHS UPDATE

NTEU National Treasury Employees Union

Azar Still Silent After Arbitrator Orders HHS to Return to Bargaining

Secretary Alex Azar has yet to respond to NTEU's [letter](#) urging that HHS return to the bargaining table.

It has been nearly two weeks since a neutral arbitrator [ruled](#) that HHS engaged in unfair labor practices by bargaining a new contract in bad faith and prematurely declaring impasse in the negotiations. NTEU immediately followed up that decision with a letter to Secretary Azar, and this week sent that same [message](#) to Assistant Secretary Elinore McCance-Katz at SAMHSA.

NTEU will continue to press HHS to do the right thing and abide by the decision, which requires that HHS return to the status quo before the articles were imposed. It also orders HHS to return to the bargaining table in good faith, but HHS may choose to appeal.

In the meantime, bargaining over the remaining six contract articles is pending scheduling the next bargaining and mediation session.

Updates from Capitol Hill

While NTEU pursues its legal strategy, the union is also taking the fight to Capitol Hill. NTEU worked closely with allies in the House to include a provision in a 2020 funding bill that prohibits agencies from implementing any contract that was not mutually and voluntarily agreed to by all parties or the result of binding arbitration.

Also, NTEU is in regular contact with members of Congress, providing updates on management's disregard for the law and for employee rights. More than a dozen members of Congress have already written to Secretary Azar, urging management to treat employees with respect and return to the table to negotiate in good faith. NTEU will continue to have important conversations with lawmakers about the impact of management's actions on employee morale and fulfilling HHS' critical public health mission.

Reminder

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"...to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect."