



October 7, 2019

**VIA E-MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL**

The Honorable Alexander M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

In previous communications from me and from members of Congress, questions have been raised regarding your bargaining team's tactics in negotiations with NTEU over a new contract. There has been concern over HHS' rush to impose their proposals to eliminate employees' workplace benefits and greatly restrict NTEU's ability to ensure fair treatment in the workplace.

An arbitrator has now ruled that your team bargained in bad faith. In a nutshell, the arbitrator found that their drive-by "bargaining" failed to fulfill their statutory bargaining obligations. He has ordered HHS to return to the *status quo* existing before these onerous terms were imposed, return to the table, and bargain in good faith. I have enclosed a copy of the decision for your information.

It is unfortunate that you refused to meet with me and that you ignored the voices of thousands of your employees who signed a petition asking for your respect. You dismissed the concerns of members of Congress and you allowed your team to press forward. With the backing of an impassioned panel appointed by President Trump, terms have been imposed that gutted employees' rights in the areas outlined above, with a devastating impact on employee morale.

This could have, and should have, been avoided. This decision is an opportunity to reset our negotiations and for HHS to meet us again at the bargaining table with a sincere desire to reach agreement on a contract, as required by law.

I am asking you to do the right thing and direct your representatives to abide by the arbitrator's decision and restart negotiations as ordered. Your employees deserve it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Anthony M. Reardon  
National President

Enclosure

1750 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 | (202) 572-5500 | [www.nteu.org](http://www.nteu.org)