



HHS and FDA Employees:

It took HHS more than a week to inform NTEU that the agency will continue to ignore its obligation under the law to fully bargain with the union. In a short reply to our demand that the agency return to the table, HHS refused to acknowledge that its bargaining position falls directly in line with the administration's three executive orders. Those orders were challenged in federal court by NTEU and core elements in them declared unlawful.

HHS is targeting your benefits. It wants to strip from your contract AWS, telework, awards and a lot of other programs. It claims taking these programs out of the contract "reduces administrative burden" on the agency. In other words, it is simply too hard for the agency to have to defend its actions to you and to NTEU.

You may have heard that HHS is trying to soften its action by claiming the programs may continue. If that is true, why take them out of the contract? It is a shame that HHS believes your right and benefits are an administrative burden. We clearly disagree.

NTEU stands up for you. That is why we negotiated these programs. Guaranteeing that you have access to programs that provide essential work/life balance is worth the cost. They are worth the "administrative burden." And, they are worth defending with language in the contract that can be enforced so HHS is accountable for its actions. These programs are actually a win for the agency and a win for you.

If you agree, then take a stand. Tomorrow is Black Wednesday and here is what you can do:

- Wear black clothing to show you stand with NTEU
- Wear a Shame on HHS sticker. You can get one from your local chapter.
- Send a message to your members of Congress at the [Legislative Action Center](#).
- [Add your name to our petition](#) to Secretary Azar. More than 6,000 HHS employees have signed.
- Tweet Secretary Azar at @SecAzar and demand HHS return to the table ([Get sample tweets](#))

Lawmakers are taking notice of HHS' actions. In a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Alex Azar, Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut and Rep. Jan Schakowsky of Illinois urged the department to resume bargaining with NTEU.

"We believe that those proposals and the decision of HHS to file for assistance from the Federal Services Impasse Panel without a serious effort at negotiation violates the legal rights of federal workers to good faith bargaining," the House members wrote, adding that "federal workers at HHS and elsewhere in the Administration deserve to be treated with respect and to have full access to the workplace rights that Congress has provided through statute."

One more thing. Make sure your colleagues understand what HHS is trying to do. [Share this one-page flier](#) that explains the situation and ask them to join NTEU in our fight.