



HHS and FDA Employees:

Yesterday, HHS proposed curtailing telework to one day a week, while permitting managers to eliminate telework altogether for employees if managers see fit. Under HHS' proposal, this would be subject to managers' sole discretion and could not be challenged. This would impact thousands of bargaining unit employees who, for years, have teleworked, many for several days a pay period.

When NTEU previously arbitrated grievances to expand telework options to three and four days a week, HHS never reported any widespread problems with the program or with employees performing their work remotely. Telework is a proven benefit for both agencies and employees, saving office costs, keeping cars off the road and cutting commuting expenses.

Telework is just one example of the benefits and rights that employees value deeply that HHS is putting on the chopping block, and that NTEU is fighting to save. We will provide updates on other proposals in the coming days.

Today, NTEU is at the table for the final day of two weeks of bargaining with a federal mediator under a schedule ordered by the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP). NTEU and management will then submit last best offers on disputed articles to the FSIP, which is expected to order adoption of language based on the offers. If a new contract is imposed that is unfair to employees, NTEU is prepared to take action.

Support for Employees Grows on Capitol Hill

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) is the latest lawmaker to voice concerns about HHS' bad faith bargaining, particularly, the agency's rush to declare impasse without engaging in meaningful negotiations.

"The dedicated federal employees at HHS and throughout the Administration deserve full access to the collective bargaining rights provided to them by federal law, including the ability to negotiate in good faith for a safe and healthy workplace, fair representation, and acceptable leave policies," Sen. Harris wrote in a [letter](#) yesterday to HHS Secretary Alex Azar.

In the new Congress, the senator will continue serving as member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal employee collective bargaining rights.

Harris urges HHS to "reverse course and bargain in good faith" in light of NTEU's legal victory invalidating key portions of anti-employee executive orders HHS relied on for its hostile bargaining tactics.

Show *Your* Support for Your Contract



On Wednesday, Chapter 212 (HHS San Francisco) conducted a lunchtime meeting at the FDA Irvine office in support of the NTEU bargaining team and to update employees about the status of negotiations. Employees wore black and “Shame on HHS” stickers for Black Wednesday.

You can demonstrate your support for NTEU's efforts:

- Show your support on social media by posting a photo with a [“Shame on HHS” sign](#) and use the hashtag #ShameOnHHS.
- [Sign the petition](#) demanding that HHS return to the bargaining table.
- Wear black clothing every Wednesday.
- Wear a Shame on HHS sticker.
- [Tweet Secretary Azar](#) at @SecAzar ([Get sample tweets](#)).

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