NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EEOC LOCALS No 216, AFGE, AFL-CIO
Office of the President
c/o Denver District Office, EEOC
303 East 17th Avenue, Suite 410, Denver, Colorado 80203
Tele: (303) 866-1337 Fax: (303) 736-3964

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2010

Contact: Gabrielle Martin
(303) 725-9079

FISCAL NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR EEOC

Today starts the first full week of the new fiscal year (FY11) at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). According to Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO, ("the Council"), which represents EEOC's employees, "In FY11, EEOC needs to make two resolutions: (1) live up to being "The Model Employer," and (2) cut the giant backlog of discrimination charges that slows help to the public."

According to EEOC's FY11 budget justification, the agency anticipates that its backlog this year will reach a staggering 105,203 cases. The average processing time of an EEOC discrimination complaint is over ten months. Martin points out, "While cases languish in EEOC's backlog, the people who brought the complaints of discrimination continue to suffer harassment, retaliation, and denial of disability accommodations." The backlog is attributable to staff shortages and bottleneck processes and historically high charge filings. New laws and the bad economy are major contributors to the high charge filings.

The Union has offered solutions, including an intake plan to get the EEOC back on course, as part of a top 10 list to the Chair. However, Martin states, "Almost a year later, the intake plan, which would uncork the bottleneck by moving specialized intake staff to the front-end is still 'under review' and may be dead in the water. If EEOC would have acted, we could be rolling out the recommended dedicated intake units this very week for the start of the new fiscal year."

Instead, what is EEOC doing to tackle the backlog? "Worse than nothing," says Martin. The Union has filed unfair labor complaints in each of EEOC's 53 offices, charging that the agency mandated quotas of cases each employee had to shut down before the end of FY10. Martin states, "The EEOC panicked before the 4th quarter, ratcheting up the case dumping requirements to try to improve the dismal year-end statistics that must be reported to Congress. Neither the public or EEOC workers should have to suffer because of this poor solution to the backlog."

EEOC's willful violation of overtime laws is another unresolved matter that follows the agency into the new fiscal year. Martin asserts, "It is a travesty that EEOC, which claims to be 'the model employer,' won't do right by its employees by paying them for overtime worked." The overtime situation resulted from the EEOC's "doing more with less" motto as it lost 25% of its workforce during a multi-year hiring freeze. Martin believes that "EEOC's new leadership should quickly and decisively bring this ugly chapter to a close to hit the reset button on labor management relations."

Martin remains optimistic that FY11 can be a year of positive change. "This could be the year that EEOC finally focuses its funding on hiring frontline staff up to the authorized ceiling. By resolving to restore frontline staff, settle the overtime case, and reduce backlog through the Union's intake plan, the EEOC could have a banner year and the public would greatly benefit."

###