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PRESS RELEASE

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EEOC UNION: WE ARE YOUR CONSTITUENTS & WE HELP YOUR CONSITUENTS

The Union which represents Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) employees, is calling on Congress to stop a government shutdown. According to Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO: “Working families will be the collateral damage of this government shutdown battle.”

Martin states, “We just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Numerous heartfelt and passionate stories of remembrance remain with us, but action to pass a budget is required to preserve equal access to the American dream.” A government shutdown means no EEOC to enforce the Civil Rights Act and the other laws barring workplace discrimination.

EEOC’s approximately 2,100 workers will be forced off the job without pay during a government shutdown. These same employees have already lost a week’s income in the past 6 months due to sequestration furloughs. Federal employees also are in the third year of a pay freeze.

Last week, EEOC employees and many other Federal agency employees suffered a several day delay in receiving their pay, due to a payroll error. Martin laments, “Last week’s late payday debacle drove home how many employees live paycheck to paycheck. A government shutdown will jeopardize the financial well being of many of our employees. Communities will feel the impact when their Federal employee neighbors cannot pay their mortgages, support local businesses, buy holiday presents, plan winter vacations, or even buy groceries.”

It is no mystery how a government shutdown will impact workers helped by EEOC. The 1995-1996 government shutdown closed EEOC for twenty-three days. Investigations piled up and became stale and drove EEOC’s case backlog up to a stunning 97,520. Depositions were delayed and settlements unraveled. Even terminally ill workers with cases pending in investigation and litigation saw their cases put on hold. Jobs were lost when EEOC workers were prevented from working.”

Martin wants to send a message, “Our members of Congress need to remember that Federal employees are not a political football. We are people. We have families. We are your neighbors. We are your constituents. We serve your constituents. This is the message that our members will be making to their representatives in e-mails, phone calls, and visits.”

Martin stresses, “EEOC’s employees want to work. Our mission of eradicating discrimination in the workplace keeps Americans on the job. We are hopeful that the leaders of this country can prevent a shutdown so that our agency can continue to contribute to protecting jobs and supporting an economic recovery for workers and employers.”

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