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PRESS RELEASE

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UNION CALLS ON EEOC TO PULL PLUG ON SECOND ROUND OF FURLOUGHS

The Union that represents employees at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is pressing the civil rights agency to stop action on plans for a second round of furloughs. Currently, EEOC is requiring every employee at the agency to take five days of unpaid furloughs. Next week the EEOC is scheduled to decide whether to go forward with a second round of furloughs, requiring employees to stay home unpaid for three more days.

According to Gabrielle Martin the President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO, "Enough is enough. Furloughs are a silent scourge undermining civil rights enforcement. If you have don't have air traffic controllers on the job, planes aren't taking off. If you don't have EEOC employees on the job, workplace discrimination laws aren't enforced. EEOC's backlog of over 70,000 cases will skyrocket. Nine month delays will worsen."

President Martin sent EEOC's Chair Jacqueline Berrien a letter today to stop a second round of furloughs. Martin's letter states, "The furlough days impact not only the EEOC's employees and their well being, but their families and the well being of the communities in which they live and support businesses and jobs, as well."

Martin's letter also cites to cost-savings measures that should be employed instead of furloughs, e.g., reducing "wasteful management travel," "reducing district budgets 5% commiserate with the sequestration reduction," "discontinuing the service contracts that allow contract support staff, paralegals and mediators to work and get paid for work EEOC employees perform." The letter also suggests canceling EEOC's EXCEL and FEPA conferences taking place in August.

The Union is calling on EEOC's employees, fellow Federal employees and Union members, stakeholders, and concerned citizens to weigh in with EEOC as it begins assessing a second round of furloughs. Martin says, "If you care about civil rights, call, email, or tweet EEOC to stop staff furloughs."

Martin adds, "You can also send EEOC the message that it's not right to place the burden of sequestration on the backs of its employees by visiting the Council 216's Facebook page, where you can download the 'Stop EEOC Furloughs' icon to make it your profile picture."

The Union also continues to work with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) on various strategies to fight furloughs and sequestration. Martin says the Union is prepared, "If the EEOC insists on a second round of furloughs, the Union will encourage employees to file a second round of appeals to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)."

Unless Congress undoes sequestration, it is here to stay for ten years. "EEOC must find a better way to manage then furloughing its entire workforce," warns Martin.