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Furlough decision pending at EEOC

Furloughs could severely hinder the mission of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, one employee group warned.

According to the American Federation of Government Employees' National Council of EEOC Locals, an agency decision to add more furlough days to those that already are planned could worsen delays of backlogged cases even further.

The union said in addition to requiring each agency employee to take five unpaid furlough days, the agency next week is slated to decide whether to bump that up by three additional furlough days.

"Enough is enough. Furloughs are a silent scourge undermining civil rights enforcement," said Gabrielle Martin, president of the council of locals representing EEOC employees.

"If you 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," Martin said in a statement. "EEOC's backlog of over 70,000 cases will skyrocket. Nine-month delays will worsen."

On June 24, Martin sent EEOC Chairman Jacqueline Berrien a letter urging her to not to impose an additional round of furloughs. The union's letter also suggested alternative cost-saving measures, such as cutting management travel, reducing district budgets in line sequestration, ending some service contracts, and canceling certain conferences scheduled to take place in August.

Separately, Martin urged members to actively oppose any additional furloughs at the agency, and said the union would rally employees to appeal any EEOC decision to extend them.

"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," Martin said.



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