



Michael Kelly
District 9 NVP

J. David Cox, Sr.
National President

Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National Secretary-Treasurer

Jeremy A. Lannan
NVP for Women and Fair Practices

May 24, 2019

Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay
111 S. 10th St.
St. Louis, MO 63102

Dear Congressman William Lacy Clay:

We are writing to express our contempt for the General Services Administration (GSA) due to the negligent lack of concern shown towards federal employees at the Goodfellow Federal Center within Missouri's 1st District, specifically located at 4300 Goodfellow Blvd, St. Louis, MO, 63120. Management is currently asking federal employees to trust their health and wellbeing to agencies who have violated the basic right to work in a safe environment since 2002.

Without the 2016 Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) investigation and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation in 2018, GSA would still **knowingly** be exposing employees to toxic contamination at the Goodfellow Center with no one the wiser. Even after GSA's inadequacies were brought to light in 2016, they continued to misrepresent the dangers. In some of the first communications with us, GSA stated "the contamination stems from building materials such as asbestos floor tile and lead-based paint that are common in buildings of this age and their presence doesn't necessarily signify a hazard or risk." GSA knew at that time the contamination involved 83 hazardous substances and not just lead and asbestos. They also knew the asbestos hazard was not from asbestos floor tile but the friable asbestos in the building basements, which were the very same basements used for storage, as tornado shelters and any type of shelter-in-place situation or drills.

While we concede GSA air testing shows lead and asbestos have not been in the air since sampling began in 2016, we have no information about the other 81 hazardous substances they are not taking samples of. We also believe employees are still being exposed through regular roof leaks, which continue to bring down ceiling tiles – sometimes directly onto employees' heads. GSA's November 2016 Environmental Memo confirmed lead, cadmium, arsenic and other heavy metals contaminated most of the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems in the buildings, meaning the contaminants were airborne before 2016 as there were not any controls in place before OSHA put GSA on notice. Federal employees were also exposed to the everyday maintenance and construction activities, which gave no consideration to disturbing the contamination, thus making it airborne for employees to breathe in.

GSA has repeatedly shown over the past 20 years they do not care about safety and health of federal employees. We ran their OSHA inspection reports starting in 2000 and found they have had at least 105 serious violations for hazards that could cause death or serious injury. Fifteen of the violations were for asbestos and two were for the death of a GSA employee in Kansas





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City in 2006. In reviewing the 2014 safety report for the Goodfellow buildings, the OSHA safety inspector noted 237 safety findings, **64 of which were repeat findings from 2012**. Most of the findings were electrical and/or fire hazards. In addition, they have not completed the recommendations set forth in the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report to maintain negative air pressure in the basements of several buildings so contaminants cannot migrate from the basements and tunnels into the offices upstairs.

GSA took away each employee's right to protect his or her health by ensuring they were not informed of the contamination in the work space. Those hazards have not been eliminated! Employees are still asked to believe GSA is properly managing the contaminations when they have been chided by their own Inspector General three times in the past nine years for not having an environmental program that protects the safety of their tenants.

Another infuriating aspect of this issue is the fact the same GSA managers were put on notice by the GSA Inspector General in 2010 for endangering the health and safety of their tenants at the Bannister Federal Complex in Kansas City, MO. During that instance, GSA also wasted taxpayer dollars by doing multiple environmental studies when they did not get the results they desired.

It is also important to note, the Social Security Administration (SSA) recently had a meeting with their employees at the Goodfellow Center, in which GSA executive leaders were in attendance, and they blatantly stated they could not speak to conditions before 2016.

Based on all the aforementioned information, we respectfully request the following:

- Congressional investigations with continued oversight into this matter until all those responsible are held accountable, starting with GSA management, and to include the executive leaders of each agency with employees harmed by the wrongdoings.
- All employees, both current and past, are notified of the environmental hazards they were/are exposed to and immediate relocation or approved telework for all employees currently working at the Center.
- All current and long-term healthcare screenings and testing for any and all employees who have ever worked within the confines of the buildings at the Goodfellow Center; workers compensation as appropriate, with the respective agencies covering the cost of legal fees where awards of compensation are made as employees should not have to pay for legal fees to obtain compensation they are entitled to; hazardous duty/environmental differential back-pay for all employees who have ever worked in





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the buildings, with a statute of limitations waiver.

- A GAO study to explain: the root cause(s) of failure to take immediate remedial action, why the concerns were studied multiple times rather than taking immediate action, why the agencies failed time and time again to relocate employees and the children in the daycare center, which could have easily mitigated the impact of the problems.
- Assistance to obtain an independent study, perhaps from NIOSH or the Center of Disease Control (CDC), showing statistical evidence of increased incidences of cancer, death rates or any other known health concerns for employees who have worked at this facility.
- If any, or all, of these investigations or studies indicate wrong-doing that could rise to the level of criminal activity, waste, fraud, abuse or violation of any civil or administrative law, the appropriate law enforcement agencies be notified and all information appropriately shared.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Kelly
National Vice President, AFGE 9th District
405-670-2656 (office), kellym@afge.org

Amy O'Rourke
President, AFGE Local 1336, Social Security Administration
913-406-3616 (cell), 816-936-3885 (office), amy@afge1336.com

Wil Grant
President, AFGE Local 3354, United States Department of Agriculture
314-265-2738 (cell), wil.grant@yahoo.com

Keena Smith
President, AFGE Local 2192, Veterans Affairs
314-337-8547 (cell), 314-253-6472 (office), Taylorkeena03@yahoo.com

Jonay McCall
President, AFGE Local 96, Veterans Affairs
314-853-0491 (cell), 314-289-6513 (office), jdmccallafge@gmail.com

