

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EEOC LOCALS NO. 216
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
AFL-CIO**

June 3, 2022

Dear Chair Burrows,

A week ago, the Union sent you a letter urging you to prioritize safety by pausing the Agency's plan to double the required days for employees to report to the office starting on June 20, 2022, in the middle of the summer COVID surge. You have said you would follow the science. You have said that you would work with the Union especially on the issue of COVID-19. Yet, you have not even responded to the Union's letter regarding the health and safety of the workforce considering worsening COVID conditions.

In the interim, EEOC now has 15 offices in the HIGH COVID Community level, as well as 20 offices in MEDIUM. This means the agency is up to 66% of EEOC's offices that are in HIGH or MEDIUM levels. Also, while Oakland is currently in MEDIUM, the numbers are rising close to the metrics for HIGH. As a result, Alameda County as of today is requiring indoor masking. Per the Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce this more protective local requirement should be implemented in EEOC's Oakland office.

The Union is aware in the last week of an employee in EEOC's Denver office contracting COVID. There has also been another reported case in the RAY Building, where the EEOC's St. Louis Office is located. During this week there have been 6 more reports of COVID in the Federal building where EEOC's San Francisco office is located, in addition to the 9 reports referenced in last week's letter. These are just the added cases that the Union has learned of this week, there are likely more cases of which EEOC is aware.

I have been in contact with an SFDO employee, who states that people in that building are packing into the elevator without masks, often from the floor where many of the COVID reports originate from. While there is a sign saying that only two people or one family unit should be on the elevator, it is ignored. When the employee has requested people not to get on the elevator beyond this limit, the request has been met with resistance. This is just one example of the gauntlet of risks faced by EEOC employees.

Even in the EEOC's unilateral reentry plan, it states: ¹

The Agency recognizes circumstances may change and that, as a result, changes to the Reentry Plan may become necessary to protect the health and safety of employees and the public. Accordingly, consistent with the Safety Plan, the EEOC will continue to evaluate national, regional, and local conditions relevant to each of the offices.

EEOC's publicly posted Safety Plan states:

The EEOC will make every effort to maximize the use of telework and remote work during widespread community transmission.

The Agency must recognize the worsening COVID conditions, change the reentry plan, and maximize the use of telework to protect the health and safety of employees and the public. EEOC's plan to soon double required office days foreseeably and needlessly increases the risks of EEOC employees contracting

¹ To be clear the Union does not agree to the Agency's unilateral implementation of its reentry plan, without completing an MOU, which is why to date we have filed three national Unfair Labor Practices (ULPs).

COVID and exposing their families and the public. Employees received an email this week from Headquarters that June is National Safety Month- “stay safe,” the email says. Nothing could keep employees safer than not doubling the in-office day requirement.

A week has passed since the Union’s first letter (attached). Please allay the anxiety of your workforce by making an announcement this week stopping the upcoming increase of another in-office day requirement.

Sincerely,

/s/ Rachel Shonfield

President, National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216 AFGE/ AFL-CIO

Telework Works!