



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Federal Union Sues Dept. of Veterans Affairs Over Unlawful Ban on Official Time

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), representing 110,000 federal employees across the country, joined the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) in filing a lawsuit against the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in response to a ‘Notice of Repudiation’ issued by the VA on November 7, 2018. The lawsuit asserts that the VA is illegally depriving medical professionals of their statutorily guaranteed right to serve under Official Time status, providing critical services to the staff of the VA. The unions are seeking permanent injunctive relief from the Court.

“Official Time is in the best interest of the government, the taxpayer and, in the case of the VA, our veterans,” stated Randy Erwin, NFFE National President. “The crux of the issue is that under Official Time, VA employees serve as an independent voice regarding working conditions, safety issues and mismanagement. Plus, they represent whistleblowers and other employees who make credible claims against fraud, waste, abuse, and political coercion and corruption. Official Time is an internal system of checks and balances, and to perform these duties as required by law, employees from all professions are needed to serve on Official Time status.”

The lawsuit was filed at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia at approximately 6:00 PM today, requesting judicial review of the repudiation notice from the VA, citing federal law that guarantees the right of Title 38 employees to use Official Time to represent employees at the VA.

“The VA kicking employees off official time in this way is a clear violation of the law,” Erwin continued. “It is in direct response to the unions’ successful lawsuit last June against the Trump Administration that nullified three illegal Executive Orders that attacked civil servants working under Official Time. The Trump Administration was willing to break the law then, and they are breaking the law again now.”

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to www.nffe.org.