

NFFE News

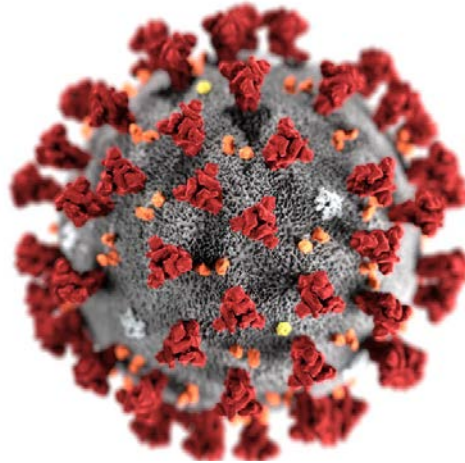


NFFE Urges Congress and White House to Protect Federal Employees as America Gets Back to Work

June 22, 2020

While the American economy slowly reopens, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) is doing everything it can to protect federal workers, as thousands prepare to report back to their federal workstations. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, NFFE has engaged Congress, the White House, and several public health organizations and coalitions to insist that the government do more to keep the federal workers, and their families, safe.

In a letter to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in preparation for a hearing last week on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operations, NFFE, in collaboration with the NFFE VA Council, [submitted a list of questions](#) on the effectiveness of protecting federal workers and patients at the VA during the COVID-19 pandemic. Namely, NFFE asked the committee to question VA executives on why the VA is unwilling to discuss COVID-19 pandemic issues with Union representatives, even though these Union representatives have valuable frontline input on the safety of veterans and employees. To date, the VA has been largely unwilling to listen to employees through their designated representatives.



Additionally, NFFE prodded Congress to ask the VA how it was maintaining enough staff given VA employee exposure to COVID-19, and why certain VA medical facilities have yet to issue hazard and retention pay to its employees during a time when VA staff is working long shifts in an intense, deadly environment.

On another front, in solidarity with our Union allies in the Federal Workers Alliance (FWA), NFFE played a leading role in organizing [a letter to the Trump Administration](#) signed by 24 federal Unions expressing concerns over the Administration's response to the pandemic and its responsibilities to the safety of federal workers. The letter provided a list of demands for the safe return of the federal workforce, including building engineering, issuing PPE, on-site testing, public interface precautions, and Union communications.

The FWA letter to the White House garnered the interest of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Government Operations which then sent [a letter to 24 inspectors general](#) across the government requesting that they inspect and oversee the government's operations to keep federal workers safe during the pandemic. Subcommittee Chairman Gerry Connolly and his staff are actively engaged with NFFE leadership on the continuing pursuit to make safety a priority, properly pay workers at risk, and provide for the professional and family support needed until the national emergency is declared over.

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