



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 23, 2020

Contact: Steve Lenkart

Phone: (202) 216-4458

NFFE Applauds GAO Investigation into Discrimination and Systemic Racism Against Veterans Affairs Workers

Washington, D.C. – The National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) joins with other federal labor unions in applauding the [decision](#) by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to [investigate](#) systemic racism at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The move follows troubling results from an internal VA survey conducted by a federal labor union. In brief, the survey found that 78% of VA employees surveyed said that racism is a ‘moderate’ or ‘serious’ problem at the agency.

“We welcome the GAO investigation which will look into the culture, policies, and practices at the VA,” stated NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “We have known about direct discrimination and systematic racism at the VA for many years, and we know these problems exist in other agencies in our government. It is our hope that this investigation will lead to others and expose the true working conditions of federal workers. There is no excuse for discriminatory treatment of any kind and unless it is aggressively confronted, it will never stop.”

VA employees have long complained of disparate treatment, but VA leadership has failed to pursue a study or an investigation into discriminatory working conditions at VA facilities. VA officials also have refused to meet with federal unions to discuss the matter. VA workers feel that these problems have been exacerbated under the Trump administration, and the administration’s resistance to confront the issue of racism will only make working conditions worse.

“On behalf of VA employees and the VA medical staff that cares for our nation’s veterans, we thank Senators Brian Schatz and Elizabeth Warren for their support to press GAO into action,” said Erwin, referring to an official [letter from the Senators](#) requesting the independent GAO investigation.

###

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.