

NFFE News



NFFE Supports the Chai Suthammanont Remembrance Act to Ensure Safety of Federal Employees

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Last week, Senators Mark Warner (D-Va.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), and Sherrod Brown (D-Oh.) reintroduced the “Chai Suthammanont Remembrance Act” in honor of a federal employee who passed away after contracting the COVID-19 virus at his workplace, Quantico Marine Corps base in Virginia. NFFE strongly supports the passage of this bill, as it will protect federal workers and ensure none are subjected to the conditions that led to Mr. Suthammanont’s unnecessary passing.

The Act will require the leaders of all federal agencies to establish workplace safety plans and publish them online within 60 days of the bill passing. The workplace safety plans must account for several measures aimed at protecting federal workplaces from COVID-19 outbreaks, including vaccine administration, coronavirus testing, contact tracing, as well as reporting processes for potential positive cases. Personal protective equipment will be provided to all employees, and plans will be developed to safeguard workers who perform their job duties outside of federal buildings and those on official travel. Federal employees will also be granted leave time to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and to recover from any resulting side effects. Not only will government agencies be required to implement workplace safety plans, but the bill also calls for inspectors general to submit reports to both the House Oversight and Senate Homeland Security committees ensuring agencies have complied with the requirements.



“As individuals, we all can adhere to basic CDC guidelines, but federal agencies must take a coordinated and responsible approach to informing their workers of workplace safety protocols and protective measures the agency will implement to protect workers,” said Christina Suthammanont, the widow of Chai Suthammanont, in *Government Executive* magazine last October. “Clear and transparent communication is needed so that every worker — and every person entering a federal workplace — knows the extent to which they are protected, or not.”

“The National Federation of Federal Employees is proud to support the Chai Suthammanont Remembrance Act in honor of Mr. Suthammanont, who passed away due to COVID-19 after exposure to the virus in his workplace,” said Randy Erwin, NFFE National President. “This bill is necessary to ensure the safety of all federal employees who answer the call to serve their country during this pandemic and any future crises.”

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