

April 7, 2020



## **NTEU Presses for Federal Employee Provisions in Next Coronavirus Bill**

Last week, NTEU sent a [letter](#) to members of Congress urging them to include provisions in the next coronavirus relief bill to help federal employees. Specifically, the [letter](#) calls on Congress to mandate hazardous duty pay, require increased telework, clarify and broaden authority around the use of weather and safety leave and provide parity with the private sector for paid FMLA leave. NTEU also urged protections for employees' collective bargaining rights to help ensure agencies work with the union to share information and protect workers from harm.

National President Tony Reardon followed up the [letter](#) with a conference call Friday to discuss the issues with Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) along with other federal employee unions. During the call, President Reardon shared the challenges federal employees are currently facing including unsafe working conditions, no hazard pay and the lack of communication from agencies regarding telework and weather and safety leave.

Both senators expressed their commitment to continuing to fight for these provisions. And NTEU will continue working to make sure employees are protected, have resources to perform their jobs in a safe environment or are provided leave to protect themselves, their families and the public.

## **Federal Employees Infected with COVID-19 can file for Workers' Compensation**

Under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, federal employees who develop COVID-19 resulting from on-the-job exposure to the virus are entitled to workers' compensation benefits. The Department of Labor released new guidance on how to submit a claim, including the steps for high-risk employees such as those working in law enforcement. Employees must apply within 30 days of the possible infection to be eligible for continuation of pay for up to 45

days. Read more on this [here](#).

### **NTEU Seeks Hazard Pay for Coronavirus Exposure**

Federal law requires agencies to provide a 25 percent increase in pay for duties involving “unusual physical hardship or hazard.” According to Office of Personnel Management regulations, viruses are listed as a condition that would make federal employees eligible for hazard pay. That’s why NTEU continues to press for hazard pay through legislation and directly from federal agencies.

The House version of the third coronavirus bill included hazardous duty pay for employees at CBP and other agencies whose work puts them at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19, but this provision was not included in the final bill passed by Congress. NTEU is working hard to make sure the provision is included in the next coronavirus relief package.

NTEU is urging certain agencies to simply award hazard pay for some positions to avoid future grievances.

### **FSAFeds Issues Reminder on Changes to Dependent Care Accounts**

Last week, FSAFeds issued a reminder in response to daycare and school closures and the possibility that the impact of the coronavirus could extend to summer camp programs.

Federal employees may increase or decrease contributions to their Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) election mid-year if they experience a [qualifying life event](#) including:

- a change in employment status for them, their spouse or dependent.
- a change in cost or coverage of dependent care services.

Learn more [here](#).

### **Update: NTEU’s Disaster Relief Fund**

Family members of deceased federal employees at NTEU–represented agencies can now apply to NTEU’s Disaster Relief Fund to help cover funeral expenses. NTEU is working with the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA) to provide financial assistance to federal workers directly impacted by the pandemic. Apply [online](#).

### **NTEU'S MISSION**

To organize federal employees to work together to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect.

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