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From the start of this rapidly developing health crisis, AFGE has been pushing for immediate action to help protect our members and the public we serve – and winning important victories.

In this week's edition of this newsletter we've included important updates and an overview of the actions we've taken in the last week to fight for the health and safety of government employees.

MAJOR WIN FOR TSA OFFICERS

Working together, our union, AFGE, won a major victory for Transportation Security Officers. TSOs will now be allowed to wear N95 respirator masks – a new safety protocol that will protect workers and the flying public.

We first began fighting for N95 masks in January, but the agency repeatedly denied our demands. Since then, we have continued to ramp up the pressure in the media, in Congress, and at the worksite to demand the most effective personal protective equipment for TSOs –

even as more than 60 TSOs have been infected with the coronavirus and dozens more forced to self-quarantine because of the agency's inaction.

Last week, TSA emailed all employees notifying them that N95 masks will be provided to all officers who elect to wear them.

HAZARD PAY LAWSUIT

AFGE and Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch (KCNF DC) sued the federal government on your behalf and for all federal employees who've been exposed to the coronavirus while performing their official duties. The named plaintiffs in the lawsuit work at the Bureau of Prisons, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Veteran Affairs, but there are likely thousands of other federal employees who have been exposed to the coronavirus while performing their official duties and are entitled to hazard pay pursuant to federal law.

Our lawsuit alleges that the General Schedule (GS) plaintiffs are entitled to a 25% hazard pay differential under Title 5, because they were exposed to "hazardous working conditions through the performance of their assigned duties and that the hazardous duty had not been taken into account in the classification of their positions." A "virulent biological" like the coronavirus would clearly qualify as a hazard under Title 5. Similarly, Wage Grade (WG) plaintiffs are entitled to an 8% environmental pay increase for exposure to micro-organisms. [Click here to learn more about this lawsuit.](#)

UPDATED BARGAINING GUIDANCE

AFGE has issued new bargaining guidance for our units to use when negotiating with agencies over the effects of the coronavirus on the workforce. It addresses topics including personal protective equipment (PPE), telework, travel, and leave. This guidance is being updated frequently to reflect changing circumstances. Visit www.afge.org/coronavirus for the latest guidance.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are an important way for AFGE leaders to inform the public about the challenges government workers are facing during this global health crisis. [David Hendrick, president of AFGE Local 2463, recently wrote to his local news outlet](#) about how the Smithsonian has failed to follow the OMB's new coronavirus contractor guidance and the impact on bargaining unit employees.

AFGE has created a template letter to the editor that you can edit included with submission instructions to help you get your letter published in your local newspaper.

[Click here for a draft letter to the editor that you can use to send to your local paper.](#)

WORKERS' COMP

AFGE has issued an updated fact sheet and guidance on filing workers' compensation claims related to the coronavirus. [Click here to view the latest document.](#)

We've also created a short video on what you need to do if you contract COVID-19 while on the job. Please take a moment to [watch and share](#).



Please regularly check afge.org/Coronavirus to view important coronavirus updates.

Note: *Information on this site is not intended to substitute for actual medical care or professional medical advice. If you believe you are, or may be ill, contact your primary care health provider immediately. Information on this website may change as the situation/recommendations/resources evolve. Please check back frequently.*

Sincerely,

Dr. Everett Kelley
AFGE National President

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