



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2017

Contact: Steve Lenkart

Phone: (202) 216-4458

Federal Employee Union Responds to House Committees Targeting Federal Employees and Veterans

Washington, D.C. – Today, in two separate committees in the House of Representatives, veterans and federal employees came one step closer to losing several levels of checks and balances that could affect everything from government whistleblowing to the impact of health and medical care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee reported out of committee H.R. 1364, a measure that penalizes any employee on “official time” — time allowed for the evaluation of management policies and workplace representation — by stripping away the time as creditable service toward retirement even though it is part of their official duties. The bill’s original sponsor, Rep. Jody Hice (R-GA), deceived the committee by claiming that official time allows union and political activity while on duty, which is false and in fact prohibited by law.

“Some Republicans in Congress are perpetuating lies about official time,” stated Randy Erwin, president of the National Federation of Federal Employees. “They are purposely misleading people about what official time is. In particular, they are trying to convince folks that official time is used for internal union business and political activity, when it simply is not used for those purposes. Now they are trying to take away workers’ retirement security because they served as a Union representative. This legislation is vindictive and wrong.”

On a separate action, House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe (R-TX) approved his own measure to create near at-will employment at the VA through his bill, H.R. 1259, ironically named the VA Accountability First Act. The bill would abolish meaningful systematic protections that help ensure a high quality of medical care for veterans, and it eliminates collective bargaining rights which serve as an accountability function between management and VA staff.

“Chairman Roe is selling out veterans by pushing legislation designed to intimidate and silence VA employees,” stated Erwin. “Without systematic protections such as due process and appeals rights for workers, good medical staff can be targeted by unethical managers or political appointees for speaking up and doing the right thing. Workplace protections for VA employees are essential to the care of our cherished veterans.”

“Chairman Roe is a tremendous advocate for the private health care industry which has a great financial interest in capitalizing on our veterans,” Erwin continued. “It would be a welcomed change to see Chairman Roe focus on proper funding for the VA and also providing the training and tools that staff need in order to succeed.”

Join IAM and NFFE-IAM in opposing these bills. You can take action by telling your representative to vote No on H.R. 1364 and H.R. 1259, [here](#).

###

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, including nurses, doctors and other health care professionals at 17 VA hospitals across the country. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to www.nffe.org.