



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT

May 17, 2018

Honorable Stanford D. Bishop, JR.
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter of concern dated April 4, 2018, regarding the status of contract negotiations between the United States Department of Education and the American Federation of Government Employees, Council 252 (the Union).

Regretfully, the Department's good faith efforts to engage the Union in negotiating a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which began in October 2016, were not met with reciprocal good faith efforts on the part of the Union. The Union abandoned the parties' ground rules bargaining for a new CBA and was not cooperative or responsive to the Department's best efforts to sit down and negotiate a new CBA. Instead, the Union continually rejected the Department's request for mediation from a neutral third-party, even when it was clear the parties were at an impasse. Negotiation sessions with the Union yielded no progress, at the expense of taxpayer money and Federal resources. Consequently, the Department was placed in a challenging situation of trying to produce a new CBA with a Union unwilling to negotiate. Therefore, the Department proposed a new CBA to the Union and extended to the Union the opportunity to negotiate over its terms. The Union failed to timely respond and protect its right to bargain over the Department's proposed CBA. This matter is now before the Federal Labor Relations Authority as an unfair labor practice allegation by the Union. The Department exercised great patience and care in ensuring it met its statutory rights to the Union before moving forward.

We value our workforce and understand the vital role our employees play in meeting the Department's mission. Maintaining our employees' interests was first and foremost in the Department's planning as we navigated through this dilemma. Please be assured that employees still retain their statutory rights and have access to all of the beneficial programs they have had access to all along through the Department's current regulations, policies, and government-wide regulations. Our employees still retain the right to use duty time to meet with their representative and to file grievances and replies to proposed actions. The Department's Safety and Health program has not changed with the transition to the new CBA. While it is true the new CBA implemented on March 12, 2018, is much slimmer than past CBAs, it contains all statutorily required information for employees, such as a grievance procedure.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation of global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

What did change with the new CBA were the Union's institutional benefits, such as official time, access to union office space, union representative travel, and per diem. However, none of those changes altered employees' rights and benefits.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Bianca Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A. Bianca Green
Chief Human Capital Officer
Office of Management