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**Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO • 815 16th Street, NW • Washington, DC 20006**

**Phone: 202-508-3705 • Fax: 202-508-3706 • Email: [jhart@metaltrades.org](mailto:jhart@metaltrades.org) • [www.metaltrades.org](http://www.metaltrades.org)**

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**TO: All House and Senate Members**

**FROM: President James Hart**

**SUBJECT: Legislative Memo  
Federal Employee / Government Contractors Issues (COVID-19)**

**DATE: April 29, 2020**

Dear Member of Congress:

As Congress considers additional measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, urges all members of Congress to conduct collective and individual oversight of current enacted "Cares Act" legislative packages that both Houses of Congress overwhelmingly passed to help American workers. This is necessary as many enacted solutions relating to issues effecting work place safety and employment conditions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are not being properly administered or carried out. Congress needs to do even more through legislation to help American workers during this pandemic crises. However, it behooves the legislative branch to ensure that the new fixes currently enacted and in place are being correctly administered and benefitting the intended targets.

I respectfully present the following issues for your information, attention and much needed remedy:

### **Hazard Pay**

Many federal workers and government contractor employees are putting themselves at increased risk of COVID-19 to work on the frontlines of the public health response and continue essential public-facing services. We urge you to insist that the existing statute which provides for hazardous pay differentials for duties involving unusual hazards that are not typical for the job, and certainly describe the current situation for many workers be enforced and paid by all effected government agencies. We urge that you further legislate hazard pay authority to provide a 25% increase in basic pay for employees in frontline or public-facing positions.

### **Pay continuity for contractor employees**

Section 3610 of the CARES Act authorizes federal agencies to use their funds to modify contracts in order to reimburse costs incurred by a contractor to provide paid leave to employees who cannot work due to facility closures or other restrictions. This provision enables agencies to keep their contractor workforce in a ready state to return to the job when that becomes possible.

Building upon OMB guidance for how agencies should determine whether and how to utilize this provision, we urge you to encourage the United States Air Force to maximize their use of this important new law. Over

Congressional Legislative Memo  
Federal Employee and Contract Workers  
COVID-19 Issues

1000 wage grade and salaried workers are laid off at Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma, Tennessee due to base closure. Adherence to this important provision of the law will provide pay continuity which will help mitigate the economic fallout from COVID-19 for contractor employees, their families, and surrounding communities.

**Personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies**

The failure of planning and preparation to ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) remains a significant concern for frontline workers across the country who cannot get the PPE they need to do their job safely. We have heard widespread alarm from federal and government contract employees who do not have the PPE they need, as well as concern about insufficient cleaning and disinfecting supplies for their workplaces. Congress has provided significant resources to address these needs for workers across the country, as well as appropriations for several agencies to procure the safety equipment and supplies needed for their workforces. All federal employees and contractors, like workers across the country, should have everything they need to stay safe on the job. We urge you to conduct oversight over federal agencies to ensure that all workers are properly protected from the silent killer which is this pandemic.

On behalf of the Metal Trades Department, and its 17 International Union affiliates who represent 5 million members, I thank you for your time and consideration of these important matters.

All federal workers and employees of government contractors deserve our full support now more than ever!