



Eric Bunn Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National President

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April 23, 2021

Martin J. "Marty" Walsh
Secretary of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room S-2018
Washington, DC 20210


Dear Secretary Walsh:

On behalf of the more than 700,000 federal and DC government employees that AFGE represents, I am writing to strongly urge the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) without further delay. We have called for an ETS since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other labor unions, and we believe it is imminently necessary to protect workers. While the last administration ignored us, we were encouraged when President Biden included the ETS in the Executive Order on Protecting Worker Health and Safety.

AFGE members have been working throughout the pandemic to perform the critical functions of the federal government: Providing health care for veterans at the VA, staffing correctional facilities at the Bureau of Prisons, inspecting our food at the USDA, and protecting the flying public at TSA, to name a few. These functions put them at risk of contracting and developing complications from the virus, and potentially spreading it to their families. Other federal employees have carried out their duties working from home and they too will need protection as federal agencies begin the process of returning employees to the workplace.

Our members are often told by their employing agencies that they are following CDC guidance, but our members report that this not always the case at their workplaces. They have had to work without appropriate personal protective equipment and in environments where social distancing and other mitigation practices are not enforced. Workers need protection from exposure to SARS-Co-V2 and guidance that an employer chooses to follow is not enough. We need specific measures and controls that employers are obligated to follow to control the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Workers need protections that can be enforced, and I urge you to promptly issue an ETS.

We look forward to working with you to improve workplace protections for all workers. I believe strongly that the federal government should set the example. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Public Policy Director Jacque Simon at simonj@afge.org or 202-203-9865.

Sincerely and in solidarity,

Everett B. Kelley
National President



