



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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June 3, 2009

Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis
U. S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

I am writing on behalf of 300,000 employees represented by the American Postal Workers Union to urge you to reverse regressive regulatory changes to the Family & Medical Leave Act that were initiated by former President George W. Bush.

Since it was passed in 1992, the Family & Medical Leave Act has protected the rights of our members and other workers who were absent from their jobs due to serious illnesses or to care for family members who suffered from serious illnesses.

Just four days before leaving office, however, the Bush administration implemented changes that have weakened the law and made it more difficult for workers to exercise the rights the legislation was designed to protect.

For example, among the new rules are provisions that:

- Allow employers to contact an employee's healthcare providers without the employees' knowledge or permission;
- Define "Serious Health Condition" more narrowly;
- Require employees to provide more medical documentation, and to provide it more often, even if their condition is permanent, and
- Permit employers to request FMLA recertification every six months in conjunction with an absence, at the employee's expense;

Legislation has been introduced in the House by Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH), which would restore the Family & Medical Leave Act to its original intent.

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In addition to that legislative effort, I request that you initiate regulatory changes that would reverse the harmful modifications initiated by former President Bush. However, I ask that you retain provisions for expanded leave rights for members of the military and their families – the one positive change among the recent modifications to FMLA regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. If our organization can provide more information or can assist in any other way, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William Burrus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "B".

William Burrus
President