

April 15, 2010

T. Michael Kerr, Assistant Secretary  
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.  
Room No. S-2203  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Mr. Kerr:

Please explain to us, the employees of the USDOL why management insists on having us endure a lengthy contract negotiation process regarding the core hours. With every day that passes, we continue to experience a lack of family-friendly conditions of employment and the inflexibility of an Administration that states over and over again the contrary. This contradicts President Obama's vision of implementing policies that promote family-friendly values.

As you know, the vision of DOL is *Good Jobs for Everyone*. That is what we see everyday on posters all over the building including in every elevator – what we read on the Department's website and hear in our leaders' speeches. We are told that this vision includes ensuring our workplace flexibility and support for our families and personal care-giving. For example, in Secretary Solis' remarks to the Union League of Chicago in September 2009, she stated that she believed in every American worker's right to fairness and flexibility in the workplace, and how she planned to work with the White House to advocate for the *Employee Free Choice Act*. Doesn't this include the freedom for DOL employees to choose whether they arrive at work by 9:30 AM or 10:00 AM if this best meets our personal and family obligations? Or is this just political rhetoric?

Considering the Administration's stance on "going green" and being environmentally conscientious, why does management insist on lengthy contract negotiations when traffic congestion in the DC-metropolitan area is one of the most horrible in the country? Our commutes to work are more often than not atrocious which results in more of us having to take Metro's public transportation system to work – this leads to the next point.

People who drive to work simply do not understand the challenges that those of us who commute to work via Metro's public transportation system face. On June 22, 2009, the worst public transportation accident in D.C.-metropolitan area history occurred. For those of us who commute into Washington from the surrounding suburbs and depend on the

train to get to work, the 30-minute extension of the core hours could have made a world of difference during the months following the accident. Does the Department realize that during those days, those of us who take the Metro's Red Line from Glenmont were asked by Metro to add an additional **60-90 minutes** to our regular commuting times? This was due to not only less trains operating and running more slowly, but also because we had to exit the train at certain points and take buses to avoid the site of the ongoing accident investigation.

Isn't it important for the Department to attract and retain good workers? Out of all of the federal departments in this country, one would think that DOL would have a better understanding than most that management who hears and is willing to collaborate with labor will increase the overall productivity and morale of their workers. Employees that are proud of their organizations and how they are being administered will be more willing to go above and beyond the call of duty.

We ask that you not make adjusting the core hours undergo a lengthy bargaining process. We are simply asking for a half hour of flexibility that could improve the quality of our work/life balance. Prior to former Secretary Chao imposing the core hours that we still to this day endure, we worked for 25 years under family-friendly conditions of employment and flexible hours.

Please let us know whether the Department's vision of *Good Jobs for Everyone* really supports the family unit, promote a flexible work environment, and empower workers like us in to **have a voice** by changing our core hours to 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

We hope we are heard.

Sincerely,

DOL Employees