

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

March 7, 2017

Dear Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I strongly urge you to oppose the "Official Time Reform Act of 2017" (H.R. 1293) during the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee markup tomorrow. This legislation would impose a penalty of reduced pension accrual on those who agree to serve as employee representatives.

Employees do not use official time for union business. Current law prohibits it—and employee unions adhere scrupulously to that law. Federal employees conduct official agency business while on official time. The use of official time is a longstanding, necessary tool that gives agencies and their employees the means to expeditiously and effectively use employee input to address mission-related challenges. It also helps to bring swift closure to conflicts that arise in all workplaces. The law limits official time to that which the union and the agency both agree is reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest. Therefore, agency officials are able to oversee the use, management, and scheduling of official time based on the immediate needs of the workplace.

This legislation proposes to cut federal employees' retirement by taking away creditable service for any time spent conducting official representational duties in excess of that cap. We believe that the pension penalty—along with changes in how employees may use official time within the federal workplace—will effectively eliminate the use of official time. In spite of these changes to official time, the union would be obligated to maintain the duty of fair representation, promoting worker safety, and working with management to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of government. We urge you to oppose H.R. 1293.

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
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American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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