



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWSEO and NWS complete submissions to the Federal Service Impasses Panel – NWS proposes to strip employees of key benefits and protections.

(April 10, 2020) As detailed in the March 24, 2020 Four Winds, the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) has asserted jurisdiction over the 42 unresolved articles for the successor collective bargaining agreement. This came at the request of the NWS, after it walked away from the bargaining table and falsely claimed that an impasse existed in negotiations. Last month, the FSIP ordered the parties to submit their “last best offer” and supporting arguments for each of the unresolved articles. The Panel will then issue an order deciding which of the proposed articles the parties must incorporate into the new agreement. The final agreement will, however, be subject to membership ratification as well as agency head review.

The parties’ “last best offers” were submitted to the FSIP last week, and their final briefs were submitted to the Panel today. ***The NWS has requested that the Panel terminate the following employee protections and benefits:***

- Terminate the practice of having at least two people on shift at WFOs. The NWS asked the Panel to allow it to have only one person on shift, alone, at night.
- Terminate the parties’ agreement that employees will be temporarily promoted when they are assigned to cover the shifts of a higher graded position that has been vacant for more than 20 days.
- Allow management to unilaterally determine the shift rotation, rather than have it decided by the Local Office Team.
- Terminate the Health Club Reimbursement program. Over 1,000 employees receive \$300 annually from this program.
- Replace the pass/fail performance appraisal system with a 5-tier appraisal system.
- Allow the NWS to unilaterally reduce the amount of funding for employee awards, leaving management with discretion to terminate the practice of allocating 1.5% of payroll costs for awards.
- Allow management the discretion to deny PCS costs in all cases, in violation of Federal law.
- Eliminate the current agreement to grant employees court leave for the entire period of jury service.

In its “last best offer” NWSEO submitted revised proposals on 29 of the 42 outstanding proposals, which demonstrates that the parties were not at impasse as the NWS contends. NWSEO is seeking improvements in existing contract terms, but the thrust of its proposals is

to retain all existing benefits that it has bargained for over the past 40 years- which NWS wants to take away.

The FSIP is a panel of ten members appointed by the President. Most of the current appointees have a professional history of working for conservative and corporate interest groups that are actively seeking to bust public employee unions. The American Federation of Government Employees has recently filed [suit](#) alleging that the FSIP is illegally appointed because the Panel members are not labor neutrals and were not confirmed by the Senate.

NWSEO will submit the new contract for ratification vote by NWSEO members in accordance with the NWS-NWSEO ground rules.

No one cares more for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employees than NOAA employees.

No one works harder for NOAA employees than NOAA employees.

We are NOAA employees. We are NWSEO.

NWSEO proudly represents more NOAA employees than any other Union. NWSEO serves bargaining unit employees of the National Weather Service, NESDIS Office of Satellite and Product Operations, Office of General Counsel, Aircraft Operations Center, and Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.