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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EEOC GETS AN “F” FOR KEEPING UP WITH ITS WORKLOAD IN 2008

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has just released its Fiscal Year 2008 Performance and Accountability Report. Rock bottom staffing and record high charges of discrimination add up to another failing grade for the beleaguered civil rights agency. EEOC's FY08 backlog of discrimination charges climbed to 73,951. This is up from the previous year's backlog of 54,970. EEOC resolved less than half of its charges by its case processing goal of 180 days. According to Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO, “This means if you knock on EEOC's door for help you can expect to wait a long time before anyone answers. Even then, it will take more than six months before your case can be processed.”

As the economy soured, a record high 95,402 charges of workplace discrimination were filed for the fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2008. EEOC has lost 25% of its workforce, ending the year with only 2,166 employees. Martin concludes, “Maintaining fewer and fewer EEOC employees to process a rising amount discrimination charges has resulted in a terrible bottleneck that is delaying justice for many Americans.”

The last time that EEOC received close to this many charge filings, it was 1994 and the agency had 650 more employees than it has today. Making matters worse, EEOC's administration continued its track record in 2008 by not filling over 200 positions authorized by Congress. “Instead of asking Congress for the resources it really needs to get a handle on its mushrooming caseload, EEOC lowballs its budget request. EEOC makes up the missing budget dollars each year by not hiring to its approved staff ceiling.”

For FY09, EEOC's workload will further increase as it takes on enforcement of two new pieces of legislation, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act. Additional funding will ensure that the public benefits from this new legislation. Even with the expanded portfolio and the 15% rise in charge receipts, EEOC only requested a 4% increase to its budget, which has been basically frozen for the five previous years.

The Senate has approved EEOC's request for the modest budget increase. The House has recommended funding EEOC at \$350,424,000, which includes an additional \$8.5 million intended to halve the agency's backlog by 2012. Martin says, “It is critical that EEOC receive at least the budget recommended by the House so that we do not fall even further behind in assisting the thousands of Americans who are relying on us. Without adequate funding, EEOC continues to break America's promise of a discrimination free workplace.”

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