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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EEOC SETTLES OVERTIME ARBITRATION

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has settled a long running overtime arbitration for \$1.53 million and other relief. Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO, the Union representing EEOC employees, announced, "Our Union is pleased that our dedicated members who worked extra unpaid hours will finally see some compensation."

The Council filed the underlying national grievance in 2006. In 2008, rulings by a Federal arbitrator found that the agency erroneously changed the classification of certain positions to exempt them from overtime. Martin states, "In the face of shrinking staff and rising backlogs, EEOC's mantra was 'do more with less.' Dedicated employees worked through lunch, past their tours of duty, and on weekends without pay to carry out EEOC's vital civil rights mission." Overturning the misclassification addressed only part of the problem.

On March 23, 2009, the arbitrator ruled that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) willfully violated the Fair Labor Standards Act by intentionally engaging in a nationwide pattern that resulted in suffered and permitted overtime for its employees. According to Martin, "It is a sad irony that the agency charged with preventing discrimination against workers, violated the rights of its employees."

The overtime arbitration against EEOC continued to wind through the arbitration claims process for the past several years. Martin says, "It has been very frustrating to employees that this case has gone on for a decade during which employees retired or unfortunately passed away. Meanwhile, EEOC claims to be the 'Model Employer.' It is no wonder our workforce is so demoralized. Our employees do not agree and you certainly don't see a *Best Places to Work in Government* plaque anywhere in an EEOC lobby."

The settlement represents the opportunity to move forward - our members at long last will see some compensation and EEOC will close the book on this ugly chapter in its history. During the decade this case was pending, it gathered dust sitting on the desks of several past agency heads. The leadership of Chair Jenny Yang helped bring closure to this matter."

However, most of all, Martin commends EEOC's workforce, "Thank you to all our employees who believe in our mission and who by speaking truth to power moved EEOC towards the reality of being a model workplace. As Martin Luther King, Jr., once wisely declared, 'The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.'"
