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PRESS RELEASE

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THE PUBLIC LOSES IN CHAIR EARP'S GAME OF CHICKEN

On December 12, 2007, Commissioner Naomi Earp will ask three fellow Commissioners to approve a \$50,000 contract to extend call center services provided by Vangent, the company with whom EEOC contracted for a call center. Despite clear direction from Congress to the contrary, Chair Earp once again seeks to pour money into Vangent's coffers. "EEOC is playing a deplorable game chicken with Congress, the public and its duty to provide public service," says Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals No. 216, the union representing EEOC's employees.

Without the votes to continue the call center early this fall, the Chair was unable to secure either a one year or six month extension and had to settle for a three month extension through December 19, 2007. EEOC then contracted with Charles E. Day Associates to assist with the call center transition. Recommendations were due November 20, 2007. The public has neither seen nor heard about the recommendations, despite the fact that on December 19, 2007, call center operations must cease. "What is clear to me after a briefing with Mr. Day, is that he was paid a lot of money, but is providing little information on how to transition the call center activities to offices where the public goes for services," says Martin. Despite the fact that EEOC posted approximately 65 positions to answer phones on USA jobs in October, not one person has been hired to answer the phones. Employees have no idea what will happen on December 20, 2007, except that chaos must be a part of it. EEOC has yet to confirm that the Commission meeting will be available to employees via streaming.

"I am concerned for the public," says Martin. Chair Earp has flip-flopped since day one on the call center, despite consistent data that the call center was a waste of money, was an extra layer of bureaucracy and provided little service to the public. EEOC has waited until the 11th hour to seek an additional extension only for phone technology services. "While use of the technology is admirable, EEOC's failure to explore any other technologies or to address how offices will handle the calls is deplorable," says Martin.

The next play in this mad game of chicken means the public will suffer. Chair Earp apparently hopes to wait out Congress. In the absence of a Congressional prohibition on the use of funds for call center operations and Commissioner Ishimaru's departure at the end of December another vote on the call center is likely. Without Ishimaru's vote against the call center and a realistic or useful transition plan, we surely will see the two Republicans vote to continue all aspects of the call center. Once again, the public is the big loser in this game of chicken.