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AFGE issues 10 challenges to new EEOC chair



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President Barack Obama named (<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/9-2-14c.cfm>) Jenny R. Yang as the new chairwoman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on Tuesday, and one union has already given her a list of issues it would like to see her address.



Jenny R. Yang, EEOC
chairwoman

Yang, who succeeds outgoing Chairwoman Jacqueline Berrien, was previously an EEOC commissioner and has served as the commission's vice chair since April. In that role, she oversaw a review of the agency's systemic program, which tracks the broader effects of alleged discrimination issues. Yang was also EEOC's representative on the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and

Pacific Islanders.

“Fifty years ago, this nation made a fundamental promise to its people to assure equality of opportunity at work,” Yang said, in a release. “Congress created the EEOC to make good on this promise — to lead the nation in enforcing our anti-discrimination laws and to champion equal employment opportunity in workplaces across America. It is a tremendous privilege and responsibility to serve this remarkable agency in fulfilling this promise to our nation.”

Fast on the heels of Yang’s appointment, the American Federation of Government Employees’ National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, which represents agency employees, released a list of its top 10 challenges for the new EEOC chair:

1. **Prioritize Resources:** In order to reduce a backlog of more than 70,000 cases with an average of 9-month processing times, AFGE called on Yang to make hiring of frontline staff a priority.
2. **Intake Overhaul:** Yang should implement a cost-efficient Full Service Intake Plan, AFGE said. This would set up dedicated intake units within each EEOC office and help reduce hour-long phone wait times for customers.
3. **Overtime:** In 2009, a federal arbitrator ruled that EEOC had willfully failed to pay overtime for some employees. AFGE called on Yang to make good on backpay claims by deserving EEOC employees.
4. **Telework:** EEOC should implement five days of telework biweekly per a 2012 collective bargaining agreement, AFGE said.
5. **Properly Manage Sequestration Challenges:** AFGE called on Yang, in the event of another round of sequestration cuts, not to balance those cuts “on the backs of employees by furloughing staff instead of other spending cuts, i.e., cuts to unnecessary management travel and contracts, and efficiencies.”
6. **Real Efficiencies:** Yang should look for “real efficiencies,” AFGE said, such as saving space via telework or revamping the systemic program.
7. **Model Employer:** EEOC ranks third among agencies with the most accusations of discrimination. AFGE said Yang should focus on improving employee morale and address employee turnover and complaints, making it a model employer.
8. **Reign in Micromanagement:** AFGE called on Yang to reduce the ratio of supervisor to employee to 1:10.
9. **Attract and Retain Talent:** Yang should see that EEOC is competitive with other agencies in creating a workplace that can attract and retain talent.
10. **Preserve Federal Employee Rights:** Yang should make sure all federal employees “do not lose their rights to discovery and a hearing under a new Federal Case Management System,” AFGE said, in a release.

“Under outgoing Chair Jacqueline Berrien, EEOC suffered from slashed sequester budgets,” AFGE said, in a release. “EEOC passed the cut along, by choosing to furlough all employees for five days and continuing a hiring freeze in effect since FY11, instead of other spending cuts. The government

shutdown exacerbated the mounting workload. Modest recent hiring has not kept up with attrition, as the EEOC's FY15 budget anticipates continued losses to investigative staff and a rising backlog this year."

In 2013, all 2,194 EEOC employees took five required days (<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/534/3380196/Another-furlough-Friday-relief-possible-for-some>) during the first phase of furloughs from April 22 to July 2. Berrien canceled (<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/434/3387253/EEOC-cancels-second-phase-of-furloughs>) a second round of furloughs in a memorandum to employees (http://www.federalnewsradio.com/pdfs/071113_eeoc_furlough_memo.pdf).

"EEOC must find a better way to manage current and future cuts than furloughing its entire workforce," said Gabrielle Martin, president of the AFGE's National Council of EEOC Locals No. 216 at the time.

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