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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EEOC RUSHES PLAN TO DISMANTLE AGENCY**

Rather than face the results of a study being conducted by the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO), EEOC is rushing to vote on a nationwide restructuring plan. Under pressure from Congress, the civil rights community and Unions, EEOC abruptly canceled a vote on the restructuring plan, which was to take place on May 16, 2005, less than a week after some details of the proposal had been revealed. Even after back-peddling and allowing for a short comment period and a last minute Q & A session, EEOC refuses to amend its "final" plan, based on comments received. Gabrielle Martin, President of the National Council of EEOC Locals, No. 216, AFGE/AFL-CIO, finds the timing of EEOC's restructuring "suspect," because the vote is scheduled before a bipartisan commissioned GAO report is completed in November.

Although the Commission late today begrudgingly announced that it now plans to hold a modified question and answer forum in one week, its actions are suspect since that date excludes from attendance by attorneys from NELA, a prominent plaintiff lawyers group. "This appears to be another of the Commission's ploys to silence its public. In the past, the Commission rushed a meeting, scheduling it on a well known and established religious holiday," says Martin. "Since the public received advance notice and has planned for the July 8 2005 meeting date, why not use that for the forum," Martin asks. The July date also provides sufficient time to provide details to the public. Another date could be scheduled for vote that allows the Commission to take into account, all of the questions and comments, as well as the GAO report.

EEOC's current proposal dismantles the agency by downgrading at least thirteen offices and expanding the geographic territories of the remaining district offices. However, the plan does not call for hiring employees to serve the areas with increased coverage, this despite a depleted workforce resulting from a four year hiring freeze.

Martin states, "What is known of the plan defies logic. The plan guts offices and centralizes them into mega regional offices covering larger territories with the

same amount of monetary resources. The plan adds layers but not people.”

EEOC refuses to justify its plan even though it has lost over 500 employees or 15% of its staff since Chair Dominguez was appointed. This plan does not address staffing losses, which the agency admits are resulting in an exploding backlog of cases. Martin is concerned that the alleged “cost savings” of the plan mean that the downgraded and smaller offices will continue to be starved of staff and resources until they die on the vine.

Dominguez’s stubborn insistence to vote on the plan by July 8, 2005, spawned members of the House of Representatives to attempt damage control, in the event the plan is implemented. On June 15, 2005, Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) offered an amendment intended to prevent EEOC from closing offices or reducing staff. The amendment failed on a close mostly party line vote. Martin applauded the over 200 members of the House who voted for the amendment. Martin stated, “Every day that we are able to educate more people about how the administration at the EEOC is attempting to dismantle the agency is a victory. The EEOC will not be able to sweep civil rights enforcement under the carpet while all eyes are on their actions.”

During the debate, which preceded the vote on the amendment, Representative Frank Wolf, Chairman of EEOC’s appropriations committee, stated “The committee has even asked the Government Accountability Office to evaluate EEOC’s proposals to reposition the agency, with a focus on the National Contact Center pilot project . . . They [GAO] have not come back yet and they are not late.”

Martin states, “Given that the investigation is ongoing and on-time, it appears that EEOC wants to push through the vote on reorganization to avoid having to deal with negative findings or conclusions. I find it highly unusual that an agency would snub not only its employees and the public, but Congress as well.”

While Martin opposes EEOC moving forward with both the short notice forum date and the July 8, 2005, vote, she still urges concerned organizations and members of the public to send comments to the EEOC Repositioning.Comments@eoc.gov, or via fax to: 202-663-4114. In the mean time, while EEOC awaits the impending vote, Martin describes the agency as “a rudderless ship drifting towards the July 8, 2005, destruction date. The public deserves to have the dream of equality in the workplace embraced by Dominguez, rather than destroyed.”