Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chair
Science, State, Justice and Commerce
Appropriations Subcommittee
H-309 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Ranking Member
Science, State, Justice and Commerce
Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Mollohan:

We respectfully urge the Science, State, Justice and Commerce Appropriations Subcommittee to assert its oversight role regarding the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Fiscal Year 2007 budget request. EEOC's budget request is approximately eight million dollars less than its Fiscal Year 2006 request, a four million drop from the budget EEOC has received over the past two years. We are writing to request that the subcommittee increase funds for frontline staffing rather than continuing to invest in controversial aspects of its field restructuring plan.

Since 2001, EEOC has lost over 575 employees, 20 percent of its workforce. Its field restructuring plan expands the jurisdictions of many offices that serve our constituents. Unfortunately, it has not supplied adequate staffing to assist with the additional workload. As a result, the number of cases EEOC is resolving is decreasing. EEOC's FY '07 budget request concedes that backlog, also known as "pending inventory," will grow "as a result of staff attrition." EEOC's own projections contend that their private sector charges backlog will rise from 33,562 in FY '05 to 47,516 in FY '07. EEOC cannot continue to shortchange its frontline resources.

We also urge the Subcommittee to retain oversight language in the appropriations bill (*"the Commission may take no action to implement any workforce repositioning, restructuring, or reorganization until such time as the Committees on Appropriations have been notified of such provisions"*). This language has been critical in allowing an opportunity for feedback from the public, civil rights groups as well as Congress. The oversight language remains essential as the commission continues to make changes to the field reorganization plan with respect to the organization of its field offices and its Headquarters.

Lastly, we ask that you reconsider allowing additional funding toward EEOC's bid to make its privatized call center permanent, particularly in light of EEOC's diminished budget request. For 40 years prior to the Pearson contract, questions from the public were handled by senior federal investigators. In place of local community-based experienced personnel, calls are being handled nationwide by distant operators with minimal on-the-job training.

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The GAO study commissioned by your subcommittee found that EEOC had "no organized approach" in considering all restructuring options. Based on their conclusions, it would seem ill-advised to continually fund this plan as implemented. We are requesting simply that Congress provide the necessary funding for EEOC to get the job done right as well as help ensure the agency utilize its resources in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Member of Congress

Thaddeus G. McCotter
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

John Conyers Jr.
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress

Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Robert Wexler
Member of Congress

Albert Russell Wynn
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

Major R. Owens
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Martin Olav Sabo
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress

Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

Ted Strickland
Member of Congress

William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress

Bart Stupak
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Julia Carson
Member of Congress

Dale E. Kildee
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

Brad Miller
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Eudolphus Towns
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

George Miller
Member of Congress

Hilda L. Solis
Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Melissa L. Bean
Member of Congress

Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Neil Abercrombie
Member of Congress

Joe Baca
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
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Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Michael R. McNulty
Member of Congress

Kendrick B. Meek
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Dennis Moore
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Solomon P. Ortiz
Member of Congress

Nick J. Rahall
Member of Congress

Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

Ellen Tauscher
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress

Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop
Member of Congress

Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress

Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Mark Udall
Member of Congress

Ben Chandler
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Lane Evans
Member of Congress

Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Benjamin L. Cardin
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

Juanita Millender-McDonald
Member of Congress

Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress

Tom Lantos
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

Stephanie Herseth
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress