October 10, 2024

URGENT ACTION NEEDED NOW:
AI Threatens Thousands of HUD Jobs – Contact Union Immediately if Asked to Use AI Tools and AI Bots or Voluntary Artificial Intelligence Skills Assessment

Dear AFGE Members,

This morning, OCHCO sent out an email encouraging bargaining unit employees (bue's) to take a voluntary AI Skills Assessment. The Union is urging you to not participate. The Union has issued a demand to bargain over Artificial Intelligence and management has denied its existence. The Union posits that management is continuing to act in "Bad Faith" and is using this tactic to usurp your rights. So, **I URGE YOU TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THIS SKILLS ASSESSMENT OR ANY FUTURE DATA COLLECTING ACTIVITY ABSENT UNION CONSENT!!!**

When was the last time your manager invested in your professional development? Asked about your career goals? Ask where you want to be in 5 years. Helped you advance your skills? For many, the answer is rarely, if ever.

Yet while neglecting employee growth, many HUD managers are rushing to adopt AI tools and AI bots that directly threaten our jobs, violate our collective bargaining agreement, and undermine the very mission of our agency. They position these tools as a way to make your work less repetitive but have not engaged the union to have those conversations. We know why! Contact us right away if AI use is proposed in your work.

The facts are alarming:

- Experts estimate AI could eliminate up to 30% of federal jobs and impact 60% or all work activities in the next 5 years - that's 1,000's of positions at HUD alone
- Private sector companies have already targeted replacing millions of workers with AI systems
- HUD was explicitly instructed to bargain over AI implementation but has completely failed to do so

- AI tools' terms of service claim ownership of work products and all additional work as "derivative" meaning HUD could lose control of sensitive data
- These tools are designed with the explicit goal of replacing human labor

We have firsthand accounts of HUD managers instructing bargaining unit employees to use AI tools, AI bots and other tools, in clear violation of our CBA. This is unacceptable and must be stopped immediately!

The cybersecurity and data protection risks are severe. Government data entered into these systems is often not protected to federal standards, potentially compromising sensitive information about HUD programs and the people we serve.

Recent Analysis of AI in the Federal Workforce

Recent analysis shows great challenges with AI in the federal workforce:
1. Surveillance and Monitoring: AI tools could be used to track employee productivity, eye movements, and behavior without union consultation.

2. Automated Decision-Making: AI systems might make important workplace decisions without human oversight or union input, including scheduling, performance evaluations, and worker activities.

3. Data Privacy and Ownership: Concerns might arise over the collection and use of worker data by AI systems without transparency or worker control.

4. Discrimination and Bias: AI systems could introduce potential bias and discrimination in in many areas of work. That can include performance metrics, workplace decision making and could include candidate evaluation and hiring.

5. Health and Safety Concerns: Increased surveillance and productivity tracking might lead to stress and negative health outcomes for workers.

6. Wage and Hour Compliance Issues: AI systems might incorrectly categorize work hours or breaks, leading to expansive levels of unnecessary monitoring. This will likely not be used to monitor managers and leaders (where it is clearly needed), but only used to monitor labor activities.

7. Lack of Human Alternatives: AI-driven decisions will likely grow with time, and this will ultimately affect workers.

8. Skills Obsolescence: AI implementation is expected to lead to rapid changes in required job skills, potentially leaving large numbers of workers behind without adequate retraining opportunities.

9. Algorithmic Management: Workers might face challenges adapting to AI-driven management systems that lack human empathy and understanding of individual circumstances.

10. Reduced Bargaining Power: The use of AI in workforce management could potentially weaken collective bargaining positions

11. Erosion of Worker Autonomy: AI systems might excessively dictate work processes, potentially reducing workers' ability to use their judgment and expertise.

12. Transparency Issues: There could be a lack of clarity about how AI systems make decisions, making it difficult for workers to understand or challenge these decisions.

U.S. Unions Addressing AI

Here are examples of US unions addressing AI in collective bargaining:

1. United Auto Workers (UAW) negotiated a contract with General Motors that includes provisions protecting workers from disciplinary action based solely on algorithmic decisions.

2. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) signed agreements with utility companies to prevent job losses due to AI implementation.

3. United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) has been negotiating for protections against job displacement due to AI and automation.

4. Communications Workers of America (CWA) announced principles for AI negotiations, including accountability, proactive bargaining, and meaningful worker voice.

5. Teamsters have been focusing on regulating AI in vehicles to protect jobs and public safety.

6. AFL-CIO partnered with Microsoft to develop worker-centered AI practices and expand workers' roles in AI design and implementation.

7. Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has been advocating for worker protections in AI implementation across various service sectors.

8. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has been addressing AI's impact on public sector jobs in their negotiations.

9. International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) has been negotiating for retraining programs as AI affects manufacturing processes.

10. United Steelworkers (USW) has been working on securing agreements that address AI's impact on industrial jobs.

11. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has been negotiating terms related to AI use in education and its impact on teaching jobs.

12. National Nurses United (NNU) has been addressing AI implementation in healthcare settings through their bargaining efforts.

13. Transport Workers Union of America (TWU) has been focusing on how AI affects transportation jobs in their negotiations.

14. The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) has been addressing AI's impact on construction and maintenance jobs.

15. American Postal Workers Union (APWU) has been negotiating terms related to AI and automation in postal services.

These unions are actively engaging in collective bargaining to address AI's impact on their respective industries and protect workers' interests. AFGE has not bargained for any AI protections! They have been instructed to negotiate and have not made good on this needed negotiating.

AFGE Will Not Stand By Idly While AI Threatens Union Jobs

We will not stand idly by while AFGE members' jobs are threatened, and the integrity of HUD's work is compromised. If you are instructed to use **ANY** form of AI, AI bots, or AI tools contact the union immediately. Use of these tools likely violates our bargaining contract and federal labor law.

AFGE Council 222 is fully engaged on this issue and expect more in the future on our efforts in this space.

We must act now to protect our jobs, our rights, and the important work we do for the American people. Don't let AI take your job or compromise HUD's mission. Contact us right away if AI use is proposed in your work.

AFGE Council 222 is committed to fighting this existential threat. But we need your help to identify where it's happening. Together, we can ensure AI is implemented responsibly - with proper oversight, bargaining, and protections for workers.

In solidarity,

Antonio Gaines
President
AFGE Council 222

Check out our website: https://www.afgecouncil222.com