

Miami: Change Has Come—But Not For The Better

On December 4, 2009, one month after the Presidential election which would require her to step down as EEOC Chair, Naomi Earp announced by e-mail the selection of Jacqueline McNair as Miami District Director. Despite the agency's lack of resources, Earp then flew to Miami on January 5, 2009, to personally install the new director.

In the short span of about three months, McNair has converted the Miami office into a place where employees dread coming to work. It took three weeks after McNair took the reins before she had an all-staff meeting. However, during that time she instituted numerous changes, without first consulting the Union. That has worsened morale for an office suffering under caseloads ranging from 100 to a high of 200 cases.

While investigators already didn't have enough time in the day to do their work, now they must attend two to four hour meetings with the director, deputy, supervisor, and sometimes legal staff. Even though this is often the first time the director is meeting the employee, she presumes the worst as she grills them and assigns batches of unmanageable case deadlines. She then sends follow up e-mails wanting to know the status of the assignments. Ironically, the e-mails further delay processing, because investigators must drop everything in order to respond to the laundry list of requests. The director is also pushing on-site investigations,

including for many low priority cases, in spite of the agency's resource constraints. Also adding to the work, the director has ordered lengthier formats for LOD's, conciliation invitation/agreements, IM's and charges.

McNair's assignments fail to take into account that Miami investigators have two week intake rotations, with another week of mail, year round EAS assignments, substantial weight reviews, filing, copying, mailing, and no clerical help. She also does not factor in that Miami's staff, like the rest of the country, is down 25% since 2001. Furthermore, she refuses to consider that it is impossible to keep up with the workload during the regular tour of duty, but overtime and therefore comp time are unavailable. As a result, Miami staff is cracking under the stress caused by the director's demands. Employees have been seen crying at meetings or when they get e-mails from the director checking on the status of her assigned deadlines.

Despite an arbitrator overturning an illegal reporting procedure for telecommut-

ing that McNair instituted in Cleveland that "removed all 'trust,'" she likewise treats employees in Miami as anything but professionals. Incredibly, after this arbitration ruling, she is still trying to undercut telecommuting in the Miami District. Under the worst working conditions and lowest level of employee morale McNair adds further insult – micromanaging use of leave and monitoring sign-in sheets. McNair is now planning on observing senior investigators conduct intake interviews and draft charges.

This is not the kind of change Miami EEOC employees had in mind. Micromanagement is the biggest obstacle preventing staff from helping the public. Instead of the director, deputy, and supervisors henpecking employees about deadlines, management could process backlogged cases themselves. The public would be better served having more people working on more cases than having a tripartite of supervisors micromanaging investigators on each case.



Rachel Shonfield, National Council Legislative Coordinator w/ Congresswomen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R) FL



Panel members at the EEOC workshop at the AFGE Legislative Conference

Local 3504 President and Vice President Michael Davidson and Stephanie Perkins with Acting EEOC Chair Stuart Ishimaru

