

2026 Legislative Priority: Restoring Telework and Workplace Flexibility

Strengthening the Federal Workforce Through Modern Work Practices

Issue Summary

Federal employees demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that telework and flexible schedules can sustain—and in many cases improve—productivity, mission delivery, and public service. Telework has also proven to be a powerful tool for recruitment, retention, continuity of operations, and work-life balance.

Despite this success, many agencies are now rolling back telework options – even without evidence-based justification or corresponding policy revisions, undermining workforce morale and the federal government’s ability to compete for talent.

Why This Matters

Telework Works

During the pandemic, agencies-maintained operations, met mission requirements, and served the public effectively while large portions of the workforce operated remotely. Numerous agencies reported:

- Sustained or improved productivity
- Reduced absenteeism and turnover
- Enhanced continuity during emergencies

Telework is no longer an experiment, it is a proven workforce tool.

Recruitment and Retention Depend on Flexibility

Flexible work arrangements are now standard across much of the private and public sectors.

Scaling back telework:

- Makes federal jobs less competitive
- Disproportionately affects employees with caregiving responsibilities or disabilities
- Drives experienced employees out of public service

One-Size-Fits-All Mandates Are Ineffective

Blanket telework restrictions ignore the diversity of federal work. Many positions can be performed partially or fully remotely without compromising mission requirements. Decisions should be mission-based, data-driven, and negotiated, not politically driven.

Local 777, IFPTE, AFL-CIO represents over 1,500 employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Chicago, Pittsburgh, Sacramento Districts and the South Pacific Division. We work in Illinois, California, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Wisconsin, Utah, Arizona, and remotely nationwide, and plan, design, build, operate, and maintain Federal water resources infrastructure and environmental restorations, and protect our nation’s aquatic resources and commercial navigation. Our members work in offices, on construction sites, at locks and dams, on government vessels, at flood control reservoirs, and at dredged material management and electric barrier facilities.

The views expressed are those of Local 777 only, and not of the Department of Defense or Department of the Army.

Requested Action:

- Support Evidence-Based Telework Policies**
 - Encourage agencies to base telework decisions on job duties, performance, and operational needs – Require agencies to justify reductions in telework with measurable data.
- Protect Collective Bargaining Rights**
 - Ensure telework and flexible schedules remain subject to labor-management bargaining – Prevent unilateral rollbacks that affect working conditions.
- Promote Flexibility as a Workforce Strategy**
 - Recognize telework as a key tool for recruitment, retention, and emergency preparedness – Support hybrid and alternative work schedules where missions allow.
- Reject Politically Motivated Rollbacks**
 - Oppose mandates driven by optics rather than mission effectiveness – Preserve agency discretion to use telework as a management and workforce tool.

H. R. ----

To revise the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL

To provide for further improvements to the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Telework Flexibility Act of ----”.

SEC. 2. TELEWORK ENHANCEMENT ACT AMENDMENTS.

(a) Collective Bargaining.— Section 6502 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting— “(d) Relationship to Collective Bargaining.—

- (1) In the case of employees in a unit represented by an exclusive representative, the implementation and termination of any telework agreements pursuant to an agency policy described under subsection (a), shall be subject to the provisions of this subchapter and the terms of a collective bargaining agreement between the agency and the exclusive representative.
- (2) Proposals by exclusive representatives offered during negotiations to implement, modify, or terminate telework pursuant to a policy described in subsection (a) shall be presumed not to excessively interfere with management rights enumerated in section 7106 of this title; an agency seeking to rebut this presumption may only do so by demonstration of severe adverse impact to the agency’s mission as measured by a preponderance of publicly available objective data.”

(b) Objectivity.— Section 6502 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting in paragraph (b)— “(7) provide that the restriction of telework for groups of eligible employees at an agency or agency subdivision level shall be made only using objective, publicly available data related to the duties of the affected employees.”

(c) Prohibition on Government-Wide Restrictions.— Section 6504 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting— “(c) Government-Wide Restrictions Prohibited.— There shall be no government-wide prohibitions on telework of any subset or type, including by executive order or directive or by guidance issued under subparagraph (b) of this Section, other than those contained in this Chapter.”