Good Evening,

We are past the mid-point in a four day week and just as the effect of three days with no official work is wearing off, we start a new weekend!  Sounds great?!  I suspect for many of you, telework has blurred the distinction between "work" days and "off" days (aka the weekend).  I know it has for me.  I work until I can't, whenever that occurs.

There have been media reports of potential changes in federal policies regarding telework and the return to our offices.  But, we have received nothing official about either.  Since new federal policies are not planned in public, I suspect that we are witnessing planted stories as the White House and OPM, along with whatever agencies may be involved, prepare federal employees for the inevitable return to the office.  Also, this placates politicians who are calling for the immediate return of federal employees because they just can't believe we can work efficiently without physical oversight.

Of course, this says more about them than it does about us.  We know about the long hours; the increased productivity; and counter-intuitively the beneficial impact on our family lives because there is no wasted commuting time.

We are several months away from bargaining a new labor management agreement which includes the telework article,  an article of increasing importance of late.  Most likely, we will be negotiating a supplement over telework before LMA bargaining to allow for offices to reopen.  When?  Don't know because we don't know what HUD intends at this time.

There is popular sentiment for continued 5 days of telework.  Yes, it has benefits.  But, consider the implications for the future.  In the short term, everyone continues the status quo.  You retain your current duty stations, same rate of pay, same physical office locations, same physical space, etc.  Does it make sense for HUD to continue the status quo with five days of telework when you could be outstationed at the Des Moines, Iowa field office where the locality pay adjustment is 15.95% compared to San Francisco at 41.44% or Los Angeles/Santa Ana at 32.41% and dramatically downsize the office space, eliminate commuter subsidies?

Just some thoughts.

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