

VA Protest 1

DJB

9/7/20(TuesAM)

Members of the largest labor union representing federal government employees in the U-S are calling for more protections for workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. Members of the American Federation of Government Employees' National VA Council held a socially-distanced protest in North Little Rock yesterday (Mon) calling for a new contract between workers and the U-S Department of Veterans Affairs. Barbara Whitson-Casanova is a registered nurse with the V-A and the president of the union's Local 2054.

News01

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“...quite concerning to us.”

Whitson-Casanova says she and union members across the country are calling for V-A Secretary Robert Wilkie to revise their contract to provide more personal protective equipment and hazard pay for staff in a series of protests this week. She says V-A healthcare workers exposed to COVID-19 are also forced to use their personal leave time for self-quarantine.

News02

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“...can lead to discipline.”

Whitson-Casanova said some protections for front-line V-A workers have been passed, but are still left to individual managers' decisions. She said her union's members have reached out to Arkansas's congressional delegation to push for protections for V-A healthcare workers similar to ones implemented at the state level by the governor and General Assembly