

Thousands of Social Security employees held rallies outside their field offices, Payment Centers, and other facilities on March 2 to protest a plan endorsed by House Republicans that would lead to a month of furloughs before the end of the current fiscal year (September 30).

Events took place at about 100 sites across the United States, and many employees were joined by their families, friends, community activists, the disabled, retirees, and other Union members.

All of them were concerned about the furloughs and how they would affect public service.

“If employees aren’t allowed to work, that would lead to unnecessary delays in processing claims,” noted Dana Duggins, the Third Vice President of Council 220, who spent more than two weeks coordinating the nationwide rallies.

“Most Americans can’t afford to have their applications or hearings put on hold,” she added.

Rosendo Rocha, the Secretary of Council 220, pointed out that a number of people leaving the Social Security Office in Grand Rapids, Michigan joined the rally in support of SSA employees.

One woman, he said, told her story to reporters who’d come to the event.

“She said she could not survive without her Social Security benefits,” Rocha continued. “She was very thankful for the federal employees who took care of her during the disability application process.

“She began to cry and hugged us all. She kept thanking us for what we do and for saving her life.”

A rally at the Birmingham, Alabama Payment Center attracted about 650 people, and in Seattle, members of the bargaining unit and their supporters had to endure 50 mile-an-hour wind gusts, hail storms, and rain.

More events are planned and employees are encouraged to participate!