

Ms. Krislyn King
Senior Site Manager
Maximus Federal
5912 US 49 #4
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Dear Ms. King:

As members of the Hattiesburg community, we were pleased when we first heard about the opening of your call center in the Clover Leaf Mall. We were happy that GDIT then – now Maximus – chose the Hattiesburg community as a resource for call center agents. Some of us even attended the ribbon cutting ceremony when the call center first opened.

The customer service professionals you employ serve an important role: as Anna Flemmings, a Tier 2 agent put it recently in a *Mother Jones* feature: “We’re the doctor, we’re the lawyer, we’re the preacher, we’re the psychiatrist, we’re just a listening ear.” Your agents help to save lives every day as they field complex inquiries from Americans on how to navigate our healthcare system.

However, we are greatly concerned about the alleged wage theft that we’ve been hearing about both in the press and from members of our community who work or have worked at your call center. Maximus employees’ pay and benefits not only affect them but also their families, our constituents, and members of our parishes.

As a study by the reputable Kalmanovitz Initiative of Georgetown University found, improved pay at the Hattiesburg call center would inject tens of millions of dollars into our community, help create new jobs, reduce racial and gender income disparities in the region—all without costing the company a dime. Congress designed the Service Contract Act so that workers at federal contractors can win regular raises through collective bargaining - this money may be considered a cost of business increase that Maximus could bill back to the federal government.

In light of that, we were particularly dismayed to hear about the company’s anti-union campaign which has made the national news, in both *New York Magazine* last month, and in the previously mentioned *Mother Jones* piece. Workers should be able to exercise their right to organize collectively to improve their life and conditions of employment without being subject to employer intimidation or interference. Maximus should ensure that its managers and supervisors do not target or retaliate against workers who are or are believed to be part of the effort to organize their call center with the hope of bargaining for family-supporting wages and benefits. We will continue to closely monitor Maximus’ operations to make sure that federal labor laws are not being violated.

In addition, we have been advised by many members of the community about your attendance policy that does not consider the basic needs of human beings who may become ill unexpectedly. Your workers may suffer from a personal emergency or have a family member who does so. We are concerned that this policy may put the safety of workers at risk when they are required to make tough choices between coming to work sick, keeping their job, or shirking responsibilities and obligations to loved ones in urgent need of their help.

We, the undersigned, call on you to treat your employees with dignity and to respect their legal right to free association. We also ask that you set a meeting time with us, your workers and their chosen union representatives in the next month to discuss the above concerns, as well as recent health care cost increases that workers are being required to absorb.

We eagerly await your reply,

Name: Juan Barnett

Title: MS State Senator, District 34

Name: Willie Clark

Title: Pastor

Name: Della Hood

Title: Attorney

Name: Thomas Romeo

Title: Retired State Senator, Lamar County

Name: F. W. SANDERS

Title: Pastor

Name: Deborah Selyer

Title: Hattiesburg City Council

Name: [Signature]

Title: Consultant

Name: Andrea Graham

Title: Administrator, TFR CDC

Name: [Signature]

Title: Concerned Citizen

Name: Peggy Answorth

Title: Democratic Party

Name: Sherry S. Dyer

Title: President, Forrest Lamar Federation for Democratic Women

Name: Sergio L. La

Title: Pastor

Name: [Signature]

Title: Secretary, Forest County NAACP

Name: James Dyer

Title: Co-Chair, Forrest County Democratic Party

cc: Bruce Caswell, Chief Executive Officer, Maximus
Thomas Romeo, General Manager, U.S. Federal Services Segment, Maximus

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