



# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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for current and retired government workers and their families since 1933  
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

## Proposed Changes for Social Security Cause for Concern Says SSA Council

**A** FGE's Council of SSA Field Operations Locals (Council 220) says that recent and proposed service changes could have a devastating impact on the Social Security Administration's ability to serve American taxpayers. Agency officials have acknowledged that as many as 200 Social Security field offices across the United States could be closed within the next year. There are now about 1,300.



**Witold Skwierczynski, Council 220 President**

The planned closures come just as so called baby boomer population is coming of retirement age. According to a demographic profile prepared by Metropolitan Life, half of the "baby boomers" lived in nine states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey. A number of closures have already taken place in many of those states (see chart on page 3).

The Congressional Budget Office, in a report dated November 2003, stated "the number of people in the United States ages 65 and over is expected to roughly double by 2030."

*"This administration apparently wants to cut public service to the point where it doesn't exist anymore."*

**—Debbie Fredericksen, Council 220 Executive Vice President**

"The Social Security Administration has devised a unique way to handle the 76 million 'baby boomers' who will eventually file retirement, disability, or Medicare claims: Close offices," says Witold Skwierczynski, Council 220 President.

The most recent example involves the Parkside area of San Francisco, where an office was shut down on December 28, even though its lease does not expire until the end of August, 2008. "Almost

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### District 4 Caucus Location Change

The District 4 Caucus will now be held May 2-3, 2008 at:

Radisson Plaza Hotel Lord Baltimore  
20 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 410-539-8400  
Toll free: 888-201-1718  
Fax: 410-625-1060

**For more information call District 4 at 410-480-1820.**



# A New Year, A New Opportunity

If the advent of a New Year is traditionally a time of hope, the start of 2008 should be great.

That's because this year we have more hope, more opportunities, and more responsibility to make needed change happen that in any 12-month period in decades.

It will be the last year in office for a president who is deservedly the least popular in modern times. It's a time to bid a not-so-fond farewell to an administration that took over the White House with an agenda to destroy the civil service, contract out everything it could to cronies, politicize government, take away fundamental rights, lower the standard of living of government employees, reduce retirement security for all Americans, and destroy the labor movement, particularly federal unions. This is an administration that even had the gumption to make civilian defense employees pawns in a disgraceful political game of chicken, threatening to lay off thousands of our members this February if the Pentagon did not receive \$178 billion in emergency war funding by mid-December.

Fortunately, we can take pride that over the last eight years, AFGE has prevented

the majority of this malevolent agenda from being implemented.

But that doesn't mean 2008 will be the last year of an anti-worker, anti-public sector regime. That depends on us. It's not enough that come next January 20, George W. Bush will head to his Texas ranch and Dick Cheney will go back to the cesspool from

- Passing the One America, and Many Voices Act, providing a 5 percent pay differential to federal workers whose position descriptions include a multilingual skill requirement that was not factored into the position's grade or wage rate.

- Ensuring that the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill prohibits the

...We reached another new high in modern AFGE membership levels as we neared the 220,000 mark.

which he came. We've got to get out there and elect a president who will fight for working families, support our rights, stop cronyism and restore justice, decency and equal opportunity to our government.

Only then will we be able to say that our long national nightmare is truly over.

Similarly, 2008 presents an opportunity to elect pro-federal employee members of Congress, so that we can prevent the forces of unrepentant greed from using the filibuster to thwart the will of the majority when it comes to any legislation to the left of Attila the Hun.

But the New Year is about more than changing the leadership of our government. It's also about changing the direction of our country now by winning important legislative battles.

It's about gutting the anti-civil service agenda embodied in the misguided National Security Personnel System (NSPS) by enacting Defense Authorization Bill language that restores collective bargaining rights to DoD employees—including national level bargaining—and reinstates civil service procedures for labor relations and appeals of disciplinary action.

It's about doing the same to MAX-HR by ensuring that the final version of the Homeland Security Appropriations bill eliminates, or at least sharply reduces, funding for its implementation.

And it's about winning victories on other legislative priorities:

- Restoring bargaining rights for VA Health Professionals.
- Counteracting Immigration and Customs Enforcement's dangerous proposal to eliminate over 350 positions in the Federal Protective Service.

use of funds for public-private competitions under OMB Circular A-76 for the federal correctional officers and other employees of the Bureau of Prisons and the Federal Prison Industries.

Along with opportunities such as these, we also face challenges in 2008 that we must overcome. First and foremost is a scheme by District of Columbia Mayor Adrian Fenty to grant himself unilateral authority over all D.C. public school employee personnel decisions, regardless of competence, seniority, or negotiated agreements. This threatened power grab and violation of our members' fundamental rights is so draconian, it makes the NSPS look like a model of due process by comparison. We must—and we will—stop it dead in its tracks.

To maximize the opportunities and hurdle the obstacles before us in this New Year, we must become stronger. I am very proud that in December 2007, we reached another new high in modern AFGE membership levels as we neared the 220,000 mark. Organizing strengthens our power to make positive change for our members. That is why we must build on this achievement through the most aggressive organizing AFGE has ever done to reach the level of political strength we need to win the many battles before us in 2008.

My New Years resolution for 2008—and I hope yours, too—is to do even more, to work even harder, to be even better. This year presents unprecedented opportunities for progress on issues affecting our lives. It is our responsibility—to our co-workers, to our families, to the American people we serve, and to the cause of the independent, professional civil service—to seize each and every one! ●

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# Proposed Changes for Social Security

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30% of the work generated from San Francisco residents is handled by (that) office,” wrote Skwierczynski in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose district includes Parkside. Skwierczynski emphasized that the office served a very diverse location.

“The Asian community alone represents nearly 40% of those served by this office. Additionally, 83% of the beneficiaries are over the age of 65,” he wrote.

In addition, SSA Commissioner Michael Astrue is advocating the use of the Internet as one way to serve the public, but Skwierczynski says that only creates another set of problems. “Claimants with communication problems and/or computer literacy questions view face-to-face service as their only service option,” he wrote in his letter to Rep. Pelosi. “Although Commissioner Astrue has established a new policy requiring SSA employees to encourage the public to use the Internet to obtain service, many disabled individuals and retirees do not possess the necessary skills to do so.

“Many low-income customers don’t possess computers. SSA employees report that the vast majority of internet applications contain significant errors which require claimant re-contacts. Some claimants become discouraged when attempting to file SSA claims via the internet and abandon their efforts. Such actions create the distinct potential for loss of benefits.”

Since 2005—when the Bush Administration lost its bid to privatize Social Security—the agency’s budget has continued to shrink and staffing is now at its lowest level since 1972.

AFGE has been lobbying for months to get the agency a larger budget, and many people are still concerned that office closures are just another step toward privatization. “This administration apparently wants to cut public service to the point where it doesn’t exist anymore,” says Debbie Fredericksen, the Executive Vice President of Council 220. “Then it can step in and say that private companies can run Social Security more efficiently than the Government. It’s a scheme we won’t allow to happen.” ●

## SSA Field Offices Closed the Last Two Years

### Atlanta Region

- Miami Central (Closed in January 2007; Staff moved into three different offices)
- North Charleston and Charleston merged

### Boston Region

- Bristol, CT (Closes 11/07; employees will go to New Britain office)

### Dallas Region

- Nacogdoches, TX (Closed in July 2007; employees redirected to work in Lufkin, TX FO)

### Florida Region

- Hallendale, FL (Closed around 11/07)

### Iowa Region

- Oskaloosa, Iowa (Scheduled to close Feb. 2008)

### Kansas City Region

- Warrensburg, MO (Closed September 2007; staff absorbed by Independence and Sedalia)
- St. Louis (NW) merged with Clayton, MO in July 07 and moved into all new offices. It was named the West County Office
- St. Louis (NE) and St. Louis (NC) merged and moved into new space in 2006 and it is named the St. Louis NC office

### New York Region

- Auburn, New York (Closed in October 2007)
- Cheektowaga and West Seneca, NY merged (October 2007)
- Bronx River, NY from Laconia, NY in March 2007
- Bay Ridge, NY

### Ohio Region

- Euclid, OH (Closed)

### Philadelphia Region

- Carbondale, PA (Closed in early 2007; all the employees went to Scranton)
- Brentwood, PA (Closed in early 2007)

### San Francisco Region

- SF Downtown and Western addition offices merged on 3/26/07 (both moved into new space; office is called SF Downtown)
- Parkside in San Francisco (Closed 12/28/07)
- Media Cities and Burbank offices merged on 8/13/07. Moved into new office space named Media Cities
- Puente Valley and Industry Hills
- San Pedro, CA (Closed 9/30/07—Public is directed to Long Beach or Torrance Field Offices)

Go to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) or [www.afgec220.org](http://www.afgec220.org) for updates.





# TSA Labor Union **Calls for Congress to Mandate Training** for Airport Security Officers

**AFGE president further discusses staffing, technology, and employee value issues**

**R**epresenting Transportation Security Administration employees across the nation, American Federation of Government Employees National President John Gage recently testified before the House Homeland Security Committee Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection on the need for enhanced training and technology, among other issues.

"TSA has made many critical decisions that have created or exacerbated obstacles to the ability of Transportation Security Officers to carry out their duties, including the availability and quality


three hours of training per week after hire," Gage explained. "The Government Accountability Office described that at least one of the three hours is 'to be devoted to X-ray image interpretation and the other two hours to screening techniques, review of standard operating procedures, or other mandatory administrative training, such as ethics and privacy act training.' However, our TSO members have reported that other than the training they received prior to beginning their jobs screening passengers and baggage, TSA has consistently failed to provide the training it is required by law."

nology that would enable TSOs to detect potential weapons not readily apparent to the human eye is available" and that while "both GAO and the DHS Inspector General have called on TSA to invest in and deploy technology that will assist TSOs in performing their screening duties, just this October, GAO found that TSA 'generally' did not achieve the goal of deploying checkpoint technologies to address vulnerabilities."

Gage also touched upon issues of employee input and value, including a 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey that showed 54% of the TSA workforce stated that creativity and innovation are not rewarded at TSA and only 38% of the workforce believed they had "sufficient resources" to do their jobs.

"Too often TSOs report they were laughed at by supervisors when they requested additional training and speaking up about an alternative process or pointing out a problem was a certain path to retaliation, which could include either actual termination or harassing the worker until they quit," Gage said.

"For the agency to be successful in its mission of protecting the American public, there must be a true and respectful discourse between TSA management and TSOs. No worker should be hesitant to point out a shortcoming that could impact public safety, because they fear retaliation from management. This is a very real threat to the TSO workforce, because TSA refuses to be bound by the Office of Special Counsel's recommendations when TSOs are retaliated against for blowing the whistle on security breaches. TSOs do not have the right to appeal serious harmful personnel decisions to the Merit Systems Protection Board—even though their managers have that right. As such, AFGE calls on Congress to pass H.R. 3212, a bill introduced by Representative Nita Lowey, that would provide TSOs collective bargaining rights and workplace protections and ensure that they are treated the same as other workers at TSA." ●



**"For the agency to be successful in its mission of protecting the American public, there must be a true and respectful discourse between TSA management and TSOs."**

of training," Gage said. "TSOs point to understaffing at airports, the lack of relevance and low quality of training, TSA's failure to fully invest in new technology, and TSA's institutional disdain for comments and suggestions from TSOs that can help spot and prevent threats to air travel.

"The Aviation Transportation Security Act—under which TSA was created—mandated that TSOs receive 100 hours of classroom and on-the-job training before they begin working, and an average of

According to a February 2007 GAO report, under TSA's Staffing Allocation Model "training is relegated to times when there is surplus staffing and should occur during 'less busy times.'" Rather than construct a model that allows times for TSOs to receive required training and master new operating procedures and technology, training is relegated to whatever time is left—even if that time is none at all, Gage argued.

Gage further went on to discuss TSA's lack of new technology, stating that "tech-

# AFGE Leader Drives off the Lot Hassle-Free Thanks to New Union Benefit



AFGE Council 214 President Scott Blanch drives away with the savings and service that come with the new AFGE Union Plus Auto Buying Program.

PHOTO BY TOM SZALAY

## *Auto Buying Service a Vehicle for Savings*

Scott Blanch wasn't looking to buy a car when he contacted AFGE's auto buying program. As president of the Government Employees Council 214, Blanch spends a lot of time extolling union values and union benefits to employees and he wanted to test the effectiveness of the new auto buying service available to his members.

"I wanted to see if it worked and if it was a good thing," says Blanch of Ogden, UT, whose council represents 50,000 Federal Air Force Weapons Systems Workers employed by Air Force Material Command. "I wasn't necessarily going to buy. I just wanted to know what I was promoting." Fueled by his interest in saving his members money, Blanch started researching the service which resulted in him saving some money of his own.

### **Blanch's Doubt Turns to Confidence**

In his test of the auto buying service, Blanch specified a GM truck with a long list of options. He spoke with Annie Kavanagh, his personal representative, on Friday afternoon and she said she would have something by

Monday. In order to determine how much he would save on the purchase, Blanch went car shopping over the weekend.

"By building relationships with fleet managers, I am able to get great deals for people like Scott," says Kavanagh. "We do all the work for the buyer so there are no

hassles and folks don't have to waste their weekends shopping around."

decided to switch his order from GM to Dodge. "Annie was already there," he says. "And when she told me that she had the deal for \$21,995.00, I was sold."

Based on his experience, Blanch says, "I will recommend this service to anybody

*"I will recommend this service to anybody looking for a vehicle.*

*The people I work with can't believe the deal I got and are already clamoring for more information."*

hassles and folks don't have to waste their weekends shopping around."

Blanch quickly found out from his search that the vehicle package he wanted was no longer available. And even if it were, the price tag would top \$30,000. Deterred by the price tag and worried that he would not be able to find parts later on, Blanch called Kavanagh on Monday morning to adjust the order.

"Lo and behold, she had found [the] truck that allegedly no longer existed," says Blanch. Nevertheless, he had already

looking for a vehicle. The people I work with can't believe the deal I got and are already clamoring for more information." Blanch is pleased with his union-made Dodge truck and his union discount.

Whether interested in buying one vehicle or a whole fleet, learn more about AFGE Union Plus Auto Buying, by logging on to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) or calling 1-888-844-AFGE. The Auto Buying Program and all the other Union Plus benefits and services are available to all AFGE members, retirees, and their immediate families. ●



# AFGE Councils Contribute **More Than \$55,000** to Legislative Action Fund

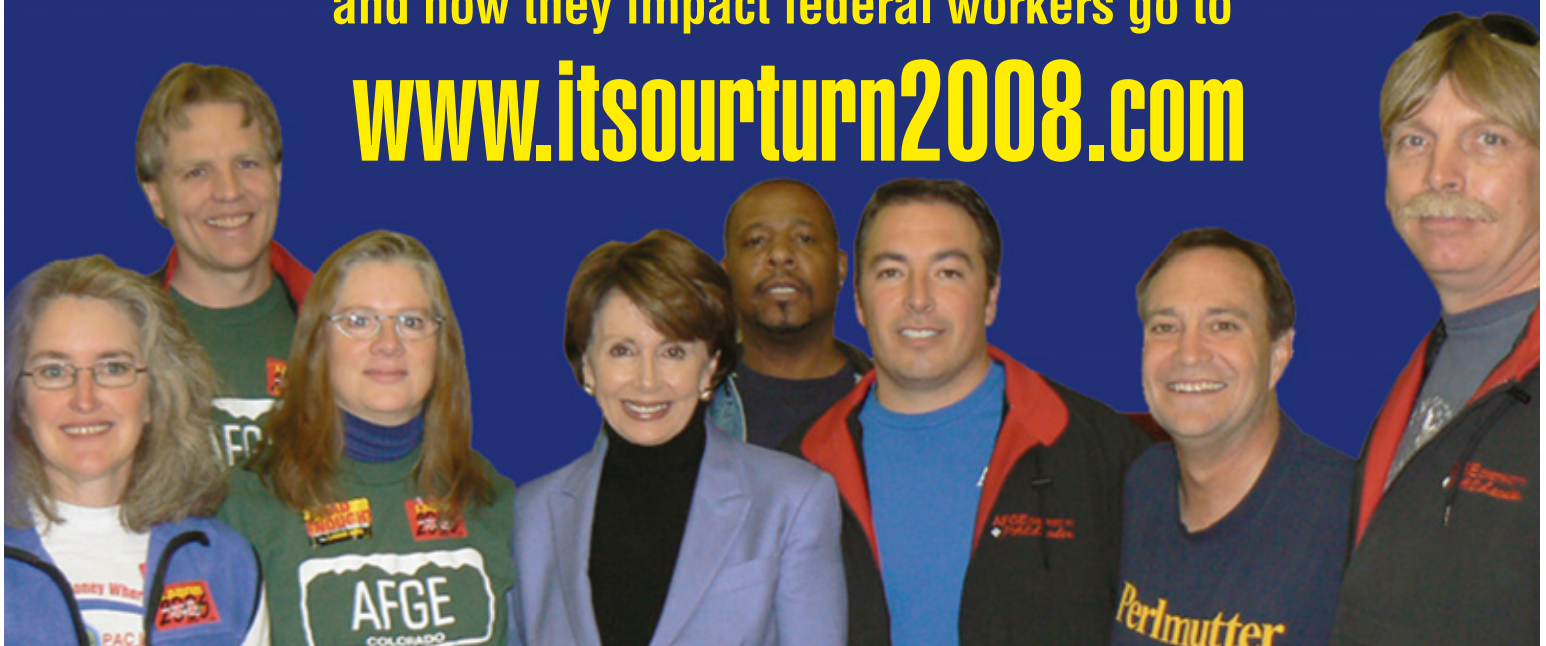


BOP Activists present NST Cox with \$10,000 LAF check. From left to right: Bryan Lowry, AFGE Council of Prison Locals National President; J. David Cox, AFGE National Secretary-Treasurer; Irene Compton, AFGE BOP Local 1570 Vice President; Roger Payne, AFGE Council of Prison Locals Secretary-Treasurer.

**A** FGE's Council of Prison Locals, National Veterans Affairs Council, National Council of Field Labor Locals, and the Air Force Material Command Locals each contributed \$10,000 to AFGE's Legislative Action Fund (LAF). With contributions from several other AFGE Councils, the LAF was able to secure more than \$55,000 to serve its upcoming political and legislative agenda. The contributions are significant because it will allow AFGE to put in motion the most aggressive election year mobilization plan that we have ever undertaken. Put simply, LAF contributions give AFGE the financial resources we need to contact, inform, and mobilize our members. "We are extremely pleased with this donation," said National Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox. "These Councils clearly understand the importance of our Legislative Action Fund and the need to drive our legislative and political program. Our Councils and their leadership realize what's at stake in the 2008 elections and are committed to being right there with us as we work to achieve our legislative and political goals." ●

For the latest information on the upcoming national elections  
and how they impact federal workers go to

**[www.itsourturn2008.com](http://www.itsourturn2008.com)**



# AFGE Win at EEOC Call Center

**A** FGE's National Council of EEOC Locals No. 216 has won a major battle with the dismantling of the EEOC's National Contact Center (NCC). The call center is scheduled to officially close mid-December.

This victory comes as a result of legislation, passed by both the House and Senate, which prohibited the use of federal funding—made available to the EEOC—to sustain a call center. The abolishing of the NCC was further solidified after the Commission failed to secure a majority vote to keep the call center in service an additional three months after its scheduled closing date.

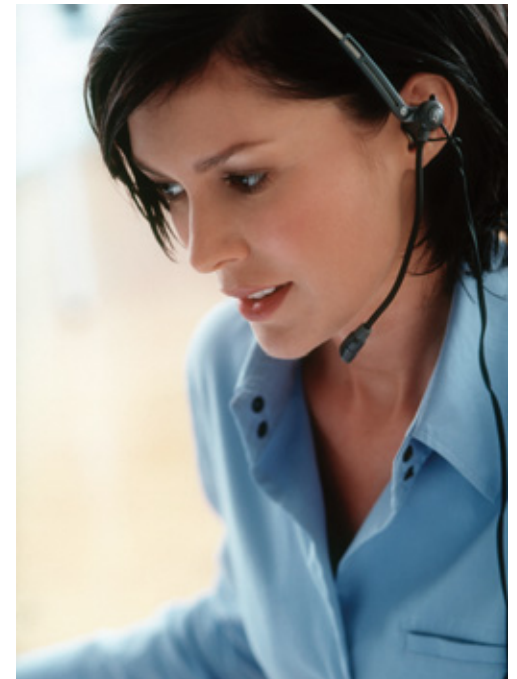
Designed to field calls and answer general questions concerning claims and EEOC programs, the NCC—implemented in March 2005—has continuously been a source of controversy. Ignoring strong union opposition, the EEOC outsourced the call center operations to Vangent Inc. under a \$2.5 million dollar yearly contract.

"Individuals contact the EEOC with the expectation that their claims will be handled by a professional, dedicated, and trained staff," said National Council of EEOC Locals No. 216 President Gabrielle Martin. "The NCC was not equipped to provide the level of service that EEOC offices offer."

Opponents of the NCC have protested the center's effectiveness and merit since its inception. By citing negative reports from the inspector general and NAPPA of the call center's poor performance, the disconnect the center caused between EEOC offices and the general public, the number of individuals who were misinformed about their claims, and the amount of resources the NCC took away from staffing efforts.

"The EEOC needs to focus its resources where they are truly needed and would best serve the public and the commission," Martin said. "Hopefully with the closing of the NCC, the EEOC will be able to hire additional investigators

and administrative support, which will ultimately lower case loads and improve the level of service." ●



## New Integrated Database System Premieres in '08

**A** FGE is overhauling their membership and financial database systems currently operating under Unix. The new system will be implemented in multiple phases, with the first phase scheduled to be completed this January.

The new database system will utilize state of the art software programs—Personify and Microsoft Dynamics GP—which will give AFGE more capabilities and ease of use.

During phase one, all current membership, historical records, and financial data will be transformed to fit the new system. Phase two will involve the unveiling of an updated My Local, which will provide more information and flexibility. Officer training for the new database system will begin in January. ●

## AFGE's Riojas Wins DHS Secretary's Award

**G**uadalupe Riojas, a Citizenship and Immigration Services Assistant and member of AFGE Local 3377, was honored with the 2007 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Award for Exemplary Service.

Riojas, who was selected for temporary assignment to the USCIS Counsel's Office, established procedures and refined work processes that helped to ensure that the Assistant United States Attorney achieved maximum efficiency to benefit USCIS. As a result of Riojas's outstanding work and unparalleled devotion as administrative support, she helped protect USCIS against potential fees of \$1,000,000.

"Like many of our members, Ms. Riojas exemplifies dedication and service," said AFGE National President John Gage. "She is being honored with an extraordinary award for her efforts and should be very proud of her accomplishments." ●



## AFGE Continues Fight to

# Protect Rights of Army Security and Police Officers

Several months ago, the United States Army moved to terminate security and police officers at bases across the country. These officers, many of whom are veterans, are being forced out because of a new policy aimed at eliminating long-term

The Army, however, has yet to present any documentary evidence of problems with the current staff that would justify the change in policy. The police officers and security guards have been performing their duties satisfactorily notwithstand-

...by removing career employees with intimate knowledge of base functions and personnel and transferring their duties to contractors, the Army is jeopardizing its own safety.

employees in favor of private contractors. In breaking with past practice, the Army began a process of demanding that its police and security guards pass arbitrary physical and medical exams. This was not only to be the case with new employees but with current staff. The Army is attempting to justify this new policy by asserting heightened security needs in the post-9/11 environment.

ing their medical or physical agility. In fact, by removing career employees with intimate knowledge of base functions and personnel, and transferring their duties to contractors, the Army is jeopardizing its own safety. In instances of national crisis, such as during the 9/11 attacks, experienced security personnel were able to lock down Army facilities not through physical endurance or strength, but by

utilizing their historical knowledge and interpersonal skills.

In addition to being misguided, the new policy also violates the Army's agreement to act in good faith with these bargaining unit employees. Agency efforts at bargaining seemed more intent at avoiding or limiting bargaining than working with the union to avoid adverse effects on employees. Prior to announcing the policy change, the Army made no effort to bargain the impact or implementation of the new policy. The Army has also reacted very slowly in response to the bargaining requests of locals to reexamine the policy's implementation.

AFGE is working with local union leaders throughout the country to develop strategies to halt adverse disciplinary actions, narrow requirements to reflect actual duties performed on a frequent and reoccurring basis, and establish reasonable accommodations for security personnel unable to meet the new physical and medical requirements.

AFGE's General Counsel's Office is working with local union leaders at Fort Benning, Ga., where seven workers are facing proposed removal, to develop effective strategies to protect the rights of these invaluable employees. In addition to Fort Benning, there appear to be five additional installations faced with this immediate challenge: Lakewood, Wash., Fort Bragg, N.C., Redstone Arsenal, Ala., Fort Greeley, Alaska, and Lima, Ohio. ●



Announcing

### Holiday Bonus Bucks!

November 26, 2007 through  
February 29, 2008

Everyone  
is a Winner!

Take advantage of this great opportunity to build your union  
and earn money and prizes for the holidays.

For every co-worker you recruit, you'll earn \$20 from AFGE National—and an additional monetary or merchandise incentive from your AFGE District Office.

If you recruit five or more members, you will receive an  
AFGE briefcase-style navy canvas bag with leather trim—and your name will automatically be entered into a drawing for one of three laptop computers!\*

Forms and information are on the AFGE web site: [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).  
Look for the Holiday Bonus Bucks under Featured Articles or call  
the Membership and Organization Department at 202-639-6410.

\*photo simulation



### Ken Lyons

In his eighth year as AFGE Local 3721 president, Ken Lyons still possesses the enthusiasm and drive that sparked his desire to join the labor movement more than twenty years ago. Throughout his career as an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedic and a union official in the District of Columbia, it has been his mission to restore and ensure that AFGE maintains and exemplifies the basic tenants of representation.

For Lyons, the union is a means of connecting with the community and an opportunity for personal growth. In 1997 he took hold of his experiences and participation with AFGE, and decided to get further involved with the union through policy and decision-making. Following two years as the EMS Committee Chair, Lyons ran for Local president. With passion in his heart and a belief that he can strengthen the core values of labor, Lyons continues to promote the importance of the union and service.

Although organizing is not a major challenge for Local 3721—since Washington, D.C. is a closed shop—Lyons still strives to educate members and help them understand that the success and strength of the union depends on the dedication of its members.

“I want to ensure that our union members are well-informed, realize the value in service, and truly comprehend that what affects them at work affects them at home,” Lyons said.

Under Lyons direction, Local 3721 has become a driving force in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. Recognizing gaps in the health care safety net and wanting to improve the standard of care received by residents and visitors of the District, the Local spearheaded—in conjunction with D.C. officials—the construction and implementation of the EMS Taskforce. The local not only assisted in the development of the taskforce, but provided numerous testimonies before the D.C. Council.



“Local 3721 wanted to find a way to enhance the level of care for the 1.2 to 2.3 million people

in the District of Columbia each day,” said Lyons. “We are more than providers of out-of-hospital services, we are the first and—in many cases—most critical element of a patient’s emergency care and people are entrusting us with their lives.”

Lyons was born and raised in Washington, D.C. He credits his devotion and understanding of community, service, and the labor movement to his upbringing in public housing, his education in the public school system, and mentors like current 14th District National Vice President Dwight Bowman.

“I love being a paramedic and a union member,” Lyons said. “This is not just my civic duty; this is something I was born to do.” ●

An advertisement for AFGE benefits. The background is orange. In the center, the text "Learn more about your benefits at www.afge.org" is displayed in large, bold, black font. Surrounding this central text are several icons and labels for different benefits: "travel" with an airplane icon, "education" with a graduation cap and diploma icon, "home mortgages" with a house icon, "auto buying" with a pickup truck icon, "insurance" with a car icon, "credit cards" with a credit card icon, and "legal services" with a gavel icon. The website address "www.afge.org" is the largest and most prominent text element.

travel

education

home mortgages

auto buying

insurance

credit cards

legal services

Learn more about your benefits at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

# Answers to Your Retirement Questions

As millions of Americans move closer to retirement, they face an array of complex financial and lifestyle decisions that will demand careful study and preparation.

Among the key questions are: "Can I afford to retire?" "When should I take my Social Security?" "How much income will I get from my pension?" "What will I do about health insurance?" "Where do I want to live when I retire?"

Anyone interested in planning for retirement will find the answers to these and many other important questions at the new AFGE Union Plus "Retirement Planning Center" web site at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) in the 'Member Benefits' section.

"Our new Retirement Planning Center will help working families plan for the future with practical, easy-to-understand information and tools about many of the issues surrounding retirement," says AFGE's National President John Gage. "We are delighted to provide this service to our members and their families."

The Retirement Planning Center includes a series of "savings" calculators that will tell future retirees how much money they will need to save to reach their financial goals. A series of "retire-

ment planning" calculators is designed to help members develop a retirement budget and handle their investments.

There's also an easy-to-use "Retirement Road Map," which features a series of 18 questions to help analyze an individual's readiness for retirement.

The site is not only for people approaching retirement age.

Members of all ages can learn steps they can take to plan for retirement.

Users of AFGE's Retirement Planning Center also are being offered a free E-Newsletter, which will contain practical advice and updates on retirement subjects. The site also links to AFL-CIO and Alliance for Retired American websites where users can take action to protect their retirement security. ●



## Be a Part of AFGE's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!

**AFGE is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we want to hear from you. Be a part of history!**

Write or email us a brief (two paragraph) summary about a unique or interesting experience you've had since becoming an AFGE member. Please include the year of the experience and a photo, if you have one. Your story and photo will be posted on a special web page AFGE is creating to commemorate our union's rich history.



Send us your story via email at [afge75@afge.org](mailto:afge75@afge.org) or mail your story to:

**AFGE History, Communications Department  
80 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001**

Photos for return must include a self-addressed return envelope (no postage necessary).



## AFGE National Veterans Affairs Council Elects Officers at 19th Triennial

# Training Convention in Hawaii



AFGE's National Veterans Affairs Council (NVAC) elected its leadership for the next three years during the NVAC 19th Triennial Training Convention held in Waikoloa Beach, Hawaii Nov. 10-16. Alma Lee and Dorothy Jefferson were re-elected by acclamation for the offices of President and Treasurer, respectively. Also winning re-election were M.J. Burke, 1st Executive Vice President; Oscar Williams, Jr., 2nd Executive Vice President, and Bill Wetmore, 3rd Executive Vice President. In addition to a Veterans Day celebration and several trainings throughout the week, the convention also featured speeches by National Education Association President Reg Weaver, AFGE National President John Gage, and AFGE National Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox, who previously served as 1st Executive Vice President for the NVAC. "I'm so proud to have served the Veterans Affairs Council for so many years, and truly honored to be a part of another successful convention," said Cox. "The AFGE National Office extends its warmest congratulations to all of the NVAC elected officials." ●





# SAVE THE DATE

# AFGE's ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

February 10 – 13, 2008 • Hyatt Regency Hotel

Check AFGE's web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

Look for more information on the 75th Anniversary Celebration, Sunday, February 10th!

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO  
80 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

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## Fraudulent Solicitations

It has been brought to our attention that a fraudulent company is soliciting advertising opportunities to local organizations naming AFGE as its parent company.

Most recently in Jacksonville, NC, a fraudulent business, with both local and 800 numbers, has collected up to \$1400, from a single company for advertising in a non-existent Defense Directory and AFGE Referral Guide. The same company has targeted innumerable, unsuspecting companies who trust the AFGE brand.

Unfortunately, in this information age, these scams are growing in sophistication and are more cumbersome to track. We must, therefore, do our part, to

protect our business and brand by ensuring that all staff is apprised of services offered, by and through the organization, so that any fraudulent attempts to extort upstanding citizens using the AFGE name are quickly defeated.

Prior to doing business with any vendor, please verify the accuracy of information provided and validity of the organization through your local Chamber of Commerce, the Better Business Bureau, and the company to which the organization claims affiliation.

If you have questions, or have received a solicitation that is questionable, please email us at: [comments@afge.org](mailto:comments@afge.org). ●