



# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

Vol. LXXVI, No. 1

January/February 2009

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

## Good Government. We're Ready! The Change Government Employees Need

By John Gage

### IT REALLY IS OUR TURN!

The historic election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States brings with it a dramatic change in the philosophy and priorities of the federal government, and a transformation in the White House's attitude toward AFGE members—one that will empower us as partners in making government work for the American people.

Instead of being scapegoated, we will be respected. Instead of being ignored, we will be heard. Instead of cronyism, we will see competence. Instead of rampant privatization, we will see fair treatment. Instead of budgets and staffing being bled

dry, we will see beefing up. Instead of having our rights trampled on, they will be restored.

We know this because President-elect Obama took the unprecedented step of writing a series of letters laying

better shape our destiny. (See page 4 for more on the letters.)

Now, let us be clear—we don't want to overpromise. President-elect Obama will be buffeted by a host of crises and concerns that could force him to do some

**We must continue to speak up or our voices won't be heard.**

out in detail his positions and plans for government employees shortly before the election.

The letters display a depth of understanding of our concerns and a respect for government employees that has been completely absent for the last eight years, and not always present even before that. They offer genuine hope that the change we need is coming on Jan. 20, and that it will indeed be our turn to

things differently than he has planned. Some of his appointees might not always treat government employees with the dignity we deserve. Ultimately, he will still be our boss and, like labor and management in any workplace, we may not always see eye to eye.

But this we do know—he recognizes that we were wrongly treated by the Bush administration. Obama views us as more  
*(continued on page 2)*

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## 2009 AFGE National Convention

**AFGE's 38th National Convention will be held  
Monday, August 24 through Friday, August 28, 2009  
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino**

2500 East Second St., Reno, Nevada 89595 (775) 789-2000

### Important information for the 2009 AFGE National Convention:

No Local will be eligible to vote unless per capita tax is paid in full by June 25, 2009. No on-site registration! Advance registration only. Must be postmarked or delivered to the NST's office by July 25, 2009. All delegates must be elected by July 25, 2009.

**Check the AFGE Web site for complete 2009 Convention details and information.**

# The **CHANGE** Government Employees Need (continued from page 1)

of a partner than an adversary, and when we speak, he will listen. There's not much more we can ask of any president.

This translates into clear, tangible changes that will make a positive difference for AFGE members. For example, President-elect Obama made clear that he supports collective bargaining rights for Transportation Security Officers and will examine TSA's flawed pay system. At TSA's parent, DHS, Obama wrote that he shares many of our concerns about the now-defunct MaxHR system and will not institute any "pay for performance" system that results in one employee being rewarded at the expense of another.

Similarly, at the Department of Defense, the president-elect has pledged to substantially revise or consider a complete repeal of the NSPS, writing that, "I cannot and will not support a pay system which discriminates against employees, and I cannot and will not support a pay system which ultimately is designed to suppress wages for civilian DoD employees over time."

At the Veterans Affairs, Obama indicated his support for funding reforms to assure that the needs of veterans are



protected from the vagaries of the annual budget process. He also pledged to address the personnel policies that have greatly eroded workers' Title 38 collective bargaining rights and weakened the agency's ability to recruit and retain nurses and doctors. And he made clear that he finds the VA's level of outsourcing to be very troubling.

The president-elect shares similar concerns over the lack of funding and staffing at SSA and reiterated his opposition to privatizing Social Security. As you can imagine, this is especially close to my heart.

I was particularly pleased by Obama's views on the Department of Labor. He emphasized that when he is president, DoL will fight to protect overtime rights, enforce wage and hour laws, and strengthen OSHA enforcement of workplace safety laws. His administration will also pursue policies that value families, including paid family leave, flexible work schedules, and telework, with the federal government leading by example.

In addition, at HUD, the EPA and other departments and agencies, the president-elect committed himself to providing the funding and staffing needed for employees to carry out their mission and enforce the law.

Throughout the federal government, it seems that the Obama administration

will put the brakes on the Bush administration's reckless rush to privatization, instead taking an honest, fair-minded look—unencumbered by ideology—at how the federal government can provide the highest quality services in the most efficient way possible.

What this tells us is that the next president's thinking is in line with ours. We can expect to be put on a level playing field, with true, fair competition in both outsourcing and insourcing decisions. We can expect to receive the tools and support we need to carry out the administration's mission and serve the American people. We can expect to see our rights protected and due process restored.

But that doesn't mean our work is over. Far from it.

We must continue to speak up or else our voices won't be heard. We must be proactive in making suggestions for improvements to the Obama administration and should not assume they will think of them on their own. We must be assertive in making our priorities known, or other matters will dominate the agenda. And we must ensure that the new administration follows through on its promises. As Obama said during his election campaign "when citizens join their voices together, they can hold their leaders accountable. I'm not exempt from that. I'm certainly not perfect, and expect to be held accountable too."

Similarly, we must be proactive and aggressive in urging Congress to take action on our agenda, ranging from restoring full collective bargaining rights for TSOs to stopping privatization at the VA. Though we have larger pro-government employee majorities in both the House and Senate, we can take nothing for granted.

We must also recognize that there are large, powerful financial interests that don't want change to happen. They will fight back with everything they have and we must match them every step of the way.

Above all, we must recognize that we now have a unique opportunity to go on the offensive, to improve the working lives of our members and the quality of government services upon which the American people depend. It's our turn now, and we must make the most of it! ●

## AFGE—The Government Standard

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# Thank You **AFGE**

Thanks to our many, many activists who worked very long hours during the 2008 Election Season.

And thanks to those of you who contributed to AFGE's PAC and Legislative Action Funds especially Local Presidents Troy Tigey and Patty Viers.

To view more photos from the election season go to [www.itsourturn2008.com](http://www.itsourturn2008.com) and for a complete list of LAF and PAC donors go to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).





# President-elect Obama Shares AFGE's Hopes for a Renewed Federal Workforce

**W**ith the historic election of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America, AFGE has a renewed sense of direction and mission for its members.

"With President-elect Obama in office, AFGE is confident that the new Congress will be able to enact laws that will right the direction of the country," AFGE National President John Gage said.

Early in the election season, Obama met with AFGE leadership on several occasions, during which he signified his support for organized labor and federal workers. Prior to his election win, Obama authored a series of letters to AFGE on the Bureau of Prisons; departments of Defense, Housing and Urban Development, Labor and Veterans Affairs; Environmental Protection Agency; and the Social Security and Transportation Security administrations.

The following are statements taken from President-elect Obama's letters to AFGE.

## Bureau of Prisons

"I share your concern that these facilities are becoming increasingly dangerous places to work due to correctional officer understaffing and prison inmate overcrowding ... Budget pressures have forced BOP to rely on overtime for current correctional staff instead of hiring additional staff, leaving the correctional workforce spread thin ... [and] have resulted in prison inmate overcrowding getting worse, often forcing BOP to house prison inmates in makeshift quarters in many institutions.

"Correctional officer understaffing and prison inmate overcrowding are resulting in a spike in the number of serious assaults, murders, and large-scale inmate riots in BOP facilities ... An Obama administration will address the underfunding problems that are resulting in the deterioration of the safety and security of BOP institutions ... will review salary and budgeting decisions that have undermined safety at BOP facilities and will work with the BOP workforce and the union to address workplace concerns."

## Department of Defense

On the matter of DoD's National Security Personnel System:

"It is inappropriate and unwise for DoD to implement such a highly contentious, ill-conceived program so late in this administration, particularly following the vast revisions included in the FY08 National Defense Authorization Act.

"I have several concerns about [NSPS], including ... restrictions on bargaining rights, the disconnection between pay and performance ...

"I cannot and will not support a pay system which discriminates against employees, and I cannot and will not support a pay system which ultimately is designed to suppress wages for civilian DoD employees over time ...

"If I am elected President, I will substantially revise these NSPS regulations and strongly consider a complete repeal."

## Department of Labor

"I will appoint a Secretary of Labor who fully supports the mission of the Department and who will protect working

## Department of Housing and Urban Development

"Because of the fiscal mess left behind by the current Administration, we will need to look carefully at all departments and programs. We plan specifically to look at work that is being contracted out to ensure that it is fiscally responsible and effective. It is dishonest to claim real savings by reducing the number of HUD employees overseeing a program but increase the real cost of the program by transferring oversight to contractors. I pledge to reverse this poor management practice."

Americans and their families ... [and] will support DoL civil servants as they work to enforce our labor laws.

"The Administrator of Mine Safety and Health will be an advocate for miners' safety and health, not for the mining companies' bottom lines. Our mine safety program will have the staffing and the enforcement tools needed to get the job done.

I will appoint a  
Secretary of Labor who fully  
supports the mission of the  
Department and who will  
protect working Americans...  
[and] will support DoL  
civil servants as they enforce  
our labor laws.

"I believe that it's time we stopped talking about family values and start pursuing policies that truly value families, such as paid family leave, flexible work schedules, and telework, with the federal government leading by example."

## Department of Veterans Affairs

"The way our nation provides funding for VA health care must be reformed. I recently cosponsored legislation to end the unpredictability and inadequacy of VA's discretionary funding process and instead, use an advance appropriations process that would allow Congress to provide VA health care dollars in advance and allow for improved planning and predictability. My Administration will recommend passage of advance appropriation legislation for the FY 2010 appropriations cycle, instead of yearly continuing resolu-

**Collective bargaining rights are fundamental for our workforce and will help ensure quality health care delivery.**

tions that lead to delays in hiring and facility construction. I will also work to fully fund veterans care.

"Earlier this year, I proudly voted for an expansion of GI bill benefits ... I was deeply troubled to learn of the VA's initial plans to contract out work under the new law, using a closed bidding process that lacked an opportunity for current VA employees to compete to keep their jobs, despite their excellent track record and the large number of veterans in these positions. I am glad that the VA reversed itself and decided to administer the program in-house ... As president, I will ensure that this landmark law is guided by the goal of educating veterans rather than enriching contractors.

The VA's interpretation of [collective bargaining] rights circumvents congress-

## Social Security Administration

"I strongly agree with you that there is a critical need to increase funding for the SSA administrative expenses account to address the serious challenges facing the agency. Due to prolonged underfunding, SSA has reduced staffing levels even as its workload has increased ... An unfortunate result of underfunding is an unprecedented backlog in SSA disability claims.

"I want assure you that I will continue to strongly oppose Social Security privatization. As you know, I have spoken out many times against President Bush's Social Security privatization plan, including a major speech in the midst of the 2005 privatization debate at the National Press Club. I also voted in 2005, 2006 and 2007 against amendments supported by Senator McCain and other Republicans that aimed to privatize Social Security."

sional intent and weakens its ability to recruit and retain an adequate workforce to care for the men and women who have sacrificed in service of our nation and our freedom. Collective bargaining rights are fundamental for our workforce and will help ensure quality health care delivery. My administration's nominees will have a clear understanding of Title 38 collective bargaining rights."

## Environmental Protection Agency

"Inadequate funding for the EPA has resulted in the ineffective allocation of resources, thus weakening enforcement and oversight of many environmental laws and regulations that protect the American people. That's why I am committed to pursuing greater funding for the EPA so that its responsibilities are carried out.

"I strongly oppose attempts by the Bush Administration to thwart publication of EPA researchers' scientific findings, as well as the attempt to eliminate the agency's library system. In an Obama Administration, the principle of scientific integrity will be an absolute, and I will never sanction any attempt to subvert the work of scientists."

## Transportation Security Administration

"If I am elected President, I will work to ensure that TSOs have collective bargaining rights and a voice at work to address issues that arise locally and nationally. Advocating for TSOs to receive collective bargaining

rights and workplace protections will be a priority for my administration. It is unacceptable for TSOs to work under unfair rules and without workplace protections...

"Collective bargaining rights ensure that federal agencies run as effectively as possible and are able to focus on protecting our national security ... also provide an excellent structure to address issues such as a fair promotion system, the scheduling of overtime, shift rotation, health and safety improvements, parking, childcare and public transportation subsidies."

"AFGE believes President-elect Obama has a genuine respect for federal employees and will provide the resources needed to tackle the critical challenges and current obstacles in order to address the needs of the American people," President Gage said. "AFGE will continue to provide a voice for its members, federal employees, and working families by elevating our issues and concerns with the Obama administration." ●

**AFGE believes President-elect Obama has a genuine respect for federal employees and will provide the resources needed to tackle the critical challenges and current obstacles in order to address the needs of the American people.**



# Obama Stresses Importance of TSOs, Supports AFGE Efforts to Secure Bargaining Rights

Even while he was running his presidential campaign, Barack Obama made clear his support for a strong, organized workforce at the Transportation Security Administration.

In an Oct. 20 letter to AFGE, Obama promised that if he were elected, he would “work to ensure that TSOs have collective bargaining rights and a voice at work” and that “advocating for TSOs” would be a priority.

“It is unacceptable for TSOs to work under unfair rules and without workplace protections,” Obama wrote, acknowledging that bargaining agreements “ensure

protections they have been deprived of for seven years.

“I’m very optimistic,” said AFGE National President John Gage. “AFGE and TSOs have fought against the anti-worker White House for so many years, and now these rights are possible under the Obama administration. TSOs only ask for the same rights as other federal workers and simply want a systematic and fair manner to deal with real day-to-day issues in the workplace, that when appropriately resolved, result in a strong, loyal workforce.

“TSOs are ready to really push for collective bargaining now and we have gotten early signs from TSA management that even they know a change is coming. I am extremely proud of our union’s seven-year fight for collective bargaining at TSA and I am gratified to finally be able to see some light at the end of this tunnel,” Gage said. “TSOs know first-hand that AFGE—as the largest and most powerful federal employee union in the country—is the best hope they have of quickly obtaining the workplace rights they have been so unjustly denied.”

AFGE has worked closely with Cong. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., to help sign co-sponsors to H.R. 3212, a bill she introduced that would repeal of a footnote of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (under which TSA was created) that gives the TSA administrator free rein to “employ, appoint, discipline, terminate, and fix the compensation, terms and conditions of employment” for TSOs. Until that footnote is overturned, and with un-questioned support from President-elect Obama, AFGE is mounting an unprecedented effort to send clear and concise message to the new TSA administrator: a collective bargaining agreement will help TSOs better serve the public because the workforce that best protects the country is a workforce that’s properly compensated, well trained, and fairly treated.

To read Obama’s letter to AFGE, and to find out more about AFGE’s efforts at TSA, visit [www.tsaunion.net](http://www.tsaunion.net). ●



that federal agencies run as effectively as possible ... [and] provide an excellent structure to address issues such as a fair promotion system, the scheduling of overtime, shift rotation, health and safety improvements ...”

In addition to addressing the negligence of workplace rights, Obama also wrote in support of “re-examining the flawed Performance and Accountability and Standards System” and possibly replacing it with the GS system used by the rest of the federal government.

President-elect Obama’s victory has enormously boosted TSOs’ morale and brought about the renewed sense of possibilities that TSOs will soon have the rights to bargain for better workplace rules and



**D**uring the past few months, the Social Security Administration tried several new directives for dealing with benefit applicants, including a new system for filing Social Security benefits via the Internet. Some of these “new and improved” directives already are causing problems for the SSA and applicants alike.

The iClaims and Ready Retirement initiatives were designed to streamline—in actuality it is doing the opposite—the Social Security Administration by moving the public to Internet services. By filing over the internet, applicants are confronting a complex set of questions and choices with little assistance. SSA employees are reporting that the need to re-contact applicants has been universal, causing lengthy delays in the claims process.

Without an SSA employee adjudicating the claims from the onset, the risk of fraud and incorrect claims being filed increases exponentially.

“It’s not only people who are filling out fraudulent applications, but applicants who just don’t understand the confusing iClaims process and unknowingly are cheating themselves out of their deserved benefits,” said Witold Skwierczynski, president of AFGE Council 220. “Moving the public over to Internet services short-changes anyone who attempts to use these services and creates a situation where fraud easily can occur. Filing for Social Security benefits is not something easily handled over the Internet, particularly if the applicant is not computer savvy.”

Here are some of the ways that the Social Security Administration is changing existing policies:

- With the new iClaims service, anyone who knows your personal information (i.e. ex-spouse, child, assistant, etc.) can file for your benefits without your knowledge.
- The marriage documentation policy has been altered to limit the information that is collected. Previous marriage information once provided SSA employees with leads to inquire about potential benefits to children and ex-spouses—benefits that do not affect the wage earner at all. With the new policy, applicants receive no guidance about these choices when filing online

## While You Were Thinking about the Election, the Social Security Administration was Busy Enforcing New Initiatives

without the assistance of an SSA representative.

- SSA employees no longer can advise the applicant that they have chosen a disadvantageous month to begin benefits, meaning that if an SSA employee knows that an applicant is missing out on deserved benefits, the employee can’t say a word.
- Applicants for unreduced benefits often are unaware that they can choose to file for spouse benefits

(including independently entitled divorced spouse benefits), preserving retirement benefits for age 70 to take advantage of delayed retirement credits.

- Another recent change eliminated the fugitive felon and parole/probation violator questions, with the first notice of the non-payment provisions being provided to the applicant in the award notice, after checks have started.

The Social Security Act requires that rights and responsibilities be communicated to benefit applicants through personal contact by an SSA employee. Those employees receive four months of in-depth training on the law, policy and procedures to ensure claims are taken and paid correctly. On average, it takes a claims representative three years to become proficient.

“Our employees know the ins and outs of the process. With the advent of iClaims, they have found that many applicants make choices and decisions that are disadvantageous because they are left to fend for themselves in navigating through a complex set of laws, rules and regulations,” said Skwierczynski. “We all know the frustration of getting a ‘machine’ when we need a person. These are your retirement benefits at stake. It’s time to stop cutting corners. SSA service centers need to be staffed and funded properly so we can do our jobs, and more importantly, so Americans can get the benefits they deserve.” ●

**Announcing**  
**Holiday Bonus Bucks!**

**T**his year’s Holiday Bonus Bucks campaign runs from December 8, 2008 through March 27, 2009. 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 the National Union and an additional monetary or merchandise incentive from your AFGE District Office. And 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 a free laptop computer! All the forms and information you’ll need 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.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES  
Statement Of Activities  
For The Twelve Month Period Ended December 31, 2007

AFGE Statement of Activities

**REVENUE**

Per capita tax and fees	\$44,229,548
Death benefit insurance premiums	993,677
Building rental income	2,419,111
Investment income	1,862,072
Net appreciation in value of investments	(845,678)
Legislative action contributions	534,020
Settlement payments	461,627
Education and training	559,359
Convention income	—
Other	763,112
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b><u>50,976,848</u></b>

**EXPENSE**

Salaries	18,031,405
Payroll taxes	1,345,645
Employee benefits	3,732,525
Net periodic pension costs	2,715,759
Postretirement benefits other than pensions	2,670,505
Organizing rebates and programs	1,603,716
Death benefit premiums	664,291
Travel	3,784,029
District office lease	340,162
Interest expense	1,081,171
Depreciation	775,439
Affiliation dues and expenses	3,165,675
Assistance to councils	755,992
Real estate taxes	622,740
Building operating expenses	705,624
Contributions	333,756
Other general and administrative	7,360,190
<b>Total expense</b>	<b><u>49,688,624</u></b>

**EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSE** **\$1,288,224**

**\*NET AFFECT OF FASB STATEMENT NO. 158** **(9,054,609)**

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** **(\$7,766,385)**

\* During the year ended December 31, 2007 AFGE adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standard No. 158, Employers Accounting for Defined Pension and Other Postretirement Plans (SFAS 158) which requires an employer to recognize the overfunded or underfunded status of a defined benefit postretirement plan as an asset or liability in its Balance Sheet and in changes in unrestricted net assets.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES  
Statement Of Expense By Activity  
For The Twelve Month Period Ended December 31, 2007

<b>DISTRICT OFFICES</b>	
2	\$1,190,997
3	755,682
4	1,266,269
5	1,676,958
6	647,197
7	758,271
8	403,474
9	804,072
10	1,247,299
11	1,081,803
12	1,362,776
14	922,879
<b>Total district offices</b>	<b><u>12,117,677</u></b>
<b>HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENTS</b>	
General administrative	6,626,316
Finance and Information services	2,824,511
Education	379,356
Service	790,243
Human resources	180,521
Legislation	1,015,861
Field services	1,053,993
Fair practices	1,258,571
Public affairs	277,986
Public policy	506,571
Political action	954,611
General counsel	2,557,008
Membership and organizing	4,610,174
Special organizing	1,676,406
Communications	1,292,573
Women's Issues	1,146,275
Media	434,184
<b>Total headquarters departments</b>	<b><u>27,585,160</u></b>
<b>OTHER</b>	
Death benefit program	664,291
Strike-Legal Fund expenses—primarily legal fees for legal right cases	44,315
Legislative Action Fund program	293,071
Legal Representation Fund program	532,343
Affiliation with AFL-CIO and other organizations	3,165,675
Costs of National Convention	17,049
Assistance to councils	755,992
Contributions, gifts and grants	333,756
Cost of operating and maintaining the Sims/Sturdivant Building, including interest on mortgage	3,969,991
District Training Funds	229,971
Union Privilege Fund	58,853
Less: Rent expense charged to District 14 for occupancy of the Sims/Sturdivant Building	(79,520)
<b>Total other</b>	<b><u>9,985,787</u></b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b><u><u>\$49,688,624</u></u></b>

# AFGE Fights to Save Veterans Care at Salisbury (Hefner) VA Medical Center

The American Federation of Government Employees, along with other veterans' service organizations, have fought a move by the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate vital health care services at the Salisbury (Hefner) VA Medical Center, organizing veterans in the affected area and lobbying Congress block the misguided policy change. In October,

to private hospitals where they will face ever-rising co-pays for fee-basis care, was done behind closed doors and without the consultation of veteran advocacy groups or employee representatives.

"The employees here were blindsided by the news that the facility no longer will provide the type of routine care veterans deserve," said Essie Hogue, president of

"...What is going to happen to the vets who come here for their care?"

AFGE filed a protest with the Government Accountability Office, notifying the watchdog agency that the proposed plan was outside the scope of the VA secretary's authority.

The VA moved to eliminate emergency and inpatient health care services at the facility despite growing demand from veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and for aging veterans who require long-term care. The move, which would send veterans

AFGE Local 1738. "But aside from completely catching the employees off guard, what is going to happen to the vets who come here for their care?" In addition to disrupting the care of veterans who are receiving health services from the VA, the changes will force veterans to seek care at private/for-profit facilities in the area.

Employees were notified of the proposed changes at the facility in a mandato-



ry meeting in September, 2008. According to VA officials at the meeting, the facility—at which the VA recently spent millions on new operating rooms, intensive care, and acute care equipment—no longer will provide inpatient, emergency or surgical medical services transitioning to a long-term care and mental health facility.

Eliminating these services will force veterans with injuries deemed non-service connected to pay huge out of pocket co-pays for care they previously received from the VA. "Our area hospitals and clinics already are struggling to meet the needs of the large number of unemployed, uninsured, and underinsured non-veterans," Hogue said. The Rowan County, North Carolina area has been riddled with lay-offs and plant closures following the decline in textile and tobacco industries. "Many of our vets do not have private health insurance. One of the primary employers in this area, Phillip Morris, is getting ready to lay off 3,000 employees—that's 3,000 people in our area that will lose their health insurance. The Wachovia buyout will put another 5,000 employees at risk in the Charlotte area," Hogue added. "Vets included."

For more information on the VA's plan to contract out medical services, including a list of the proposed locations and letters from the chairman and former chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, visit [www.fundtheva.com](http://www.fundtheva.com). ●

## OPTIONS 2009: The future of AFGE We need you

AFGE is now engaged in a process called "Options 2009," which has brought together NEC members and representatives of AFGE Councils and Locals. The Options 2009 Committee is looking at what has and has not been working and what has not in our union since AFGE adopted a strategic plan in 2002.

But the committee cannot do this by itself; it needs your input. In the next several months you likely will receive a survey aimed at gaining your views on what you think AFGE has accomplished and what direction you feel we should take as an organization.

**Go to [www.options2009.org](http://www.options2009.org) for more information.**





## JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED

### AFGE Calls on DC Mayor to Make PERB Appointments

**A** FGE District 14 and the District of Columbia Central Labor Council are pressing Washington, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty to nominate qualified individuals for posts on the Public Employees Review Board (PERB). The five member board, which acts as an independent judge of employee and agency disputes, has been inoperable since June 2008 because the mayor has failed to nominate qualified members. Without the necessary number of members, the board cannot have a quorum, and cannot function properly. Since June, PERB has been unable to decide disputes between employees and their respective agencies. The Board's inability to make final decisions has resulted in a backlog of cases, creating difficulty for both workers and agencies alike.

DC government employees rely on PERB to decide labor-management issues at the heart of public employment, including: the determination of appropriate bargaining units, the certification or decertification of labor organizations as exclusive bargaining representatives, the facilitation of impasse resolution during contract negotiations, and the resolution of arbitration award appeals. All of these decisions have a profound impact on DC government employees and the inability of the Board to resolve these claims seriously impairs the ability of District agencies to best serve the residents and visitors of the District of Columbia.

Every employee deserves the right to due process. The absence of a working PERB denies employees that right by failing to ensure that their voices will be heard by an impartial body with the goal of reaching a just and fair resolution. The longer Mayor Fenty fails to nominate qualified individuals to the PERB, the longer he delays—and therefore denies—DC public employees their right to justice. ●

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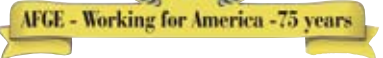
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