



The Government

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

Vol. 17, No. 2

March/April 2001

STANDARD

a publication for government workers and their families

www.afge.org

BUSH SLAMS PARTNERSHIPS



On Saturday, February 17, 2001, just weeks after ordering a hiring freeze in the federal government, President **George W. Bush** revoked the Clinton labor/management Executive Order (E.O. 12871).

“In one day, President Bush has torn apart what has taken years to craft—the development of a government workplace that is people-driven, highly flexible, creative and responsive to the changing needs of the American people,” said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. (see **Partnerships Assaulted** on page 6)

Local 1995 Member-Inventor Wins Award “The Nobel Prize of Applied Research”



Dr. Ranjani Siriwardane

Dr. Ranjani Siriwardane, a member of AFGE Local 1995, is a scientist in the U.S. Department of Energy at the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) in Morgantown, W.Va. What makes her a standout is that she was recognized in September by *R&D Magazine* for making one of the 100 most significant technology developments in the year 2000. (see **Member-Inventor** on page 8)

TRAC Act Introduced in U.S. House H.R. 721



Same bill name, different Congress. The TRAC Act was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative **Al Wynn** (D-Md.) on February 14, 2001, (H.R. 721). Calls are urgently needed from your home to Representatives who cosponsored the TRAC Act in the 106th Congress. E-mails and/or letters from your home should follow your personal phone call. (see **TRAC Act Introduced** on page 7)

OSHA Ergonomics Standard in Jeopardy

After ten long years of struggle, workers in this country finally won protections to prevent crippling repetitive strain injuries, the nation’s biggest job safety problem. OSHA’s new ergonomics standard, issued in November, went into effect on January 16. But with Republicans controlling the Congress and the White House, this new worker protection measure is in danger as opponents aim to repeal this important standard. (see **Health & Safety Watch** on page 7)

NEWS FLASH...NEWS FLASH...

Bush’s Executive Order to eliminate the National Partnership Council **DOES NOT** require existing partnerships to be disbanded. (see **What Does This Mean?** on page 7)

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AFGE Legislative Agenda

A Message From President Bobby L. Harnage



I've always believed that the best way to meet challenges is to be prepared. That's the sort of guy I am. That's the sort of union leader I've always been. There is no question that AFGE will be facing several significant challenges over the next year. And it's absolutely imperative that we be prepared. The jobs, pay, and benefits of federal employees are at stake. That's no hype. That's a fact.

What can we do to ensure that federal employees receive the pay increases they have earned? AFGE will be working even more aggressively on pay. Two years ago, AFGE was successful in persuading the Congress and the President to give federal employees their biggest pay increase—4.8 percent—in twenty years by following the principle of pay parity: military and civilian personnel should receive the same pay increases. With proposals to dramatically increase military pay receiving serious consideration, you can bet that AFGE will insist that civilian employees receive the same big pay increase.

The challenge is that there are a lot of politicians in Washington, D.C., who would prefer to squander our budget surpluses on a gigantic tax cut directed towards corporations and the wealthy. We all know what happened the last time corporations and the wealthy received a gigantic tax cut, right? Years of gigantic budget deficits. Politicians weren't shy about using those deficits as excuses to eliminate or delay the pay increases we were guaranteed by law. Well, now that the economy is booming and the budget is in surplus, we're expecting more than a little payback! Since 1980, federal employees and retirees have contributed more than \$200 billion towards deficit reduction, more than any other discrete group of Americans. Before the politicians start talking about tax cuts, they need to make good on their debt to federal employees and retirees.

What can we do to reduce the costs of health care for federal employees? Our health insurance premiums have gone up by 36 percent over the last four years. This is absolutely intolerable. The drug companies and the health insurance carriers have used their money and

influence to rig the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) to serve the interests of their shareholders—instead of the interests of federal employees and all other taxpayers. AFGE will fight to reduce the cost of FEHBP to all taxpayers, including federal employees and their families. And, while we're doing that, AFGE will fight to enact legislation that will require agencies to pick up a greater share of the costs of health insurance premiums, like their large private sector counterparts already do. As long as I'm your National President, I will never back down from a fight with the health care industry's greedy profiteers.

What can we do to fight the scourge of contracting out and privatization? AFGE is the unquestioned leader of the fight against contracting out and privatization. Our union's Stop Wasting America's Money on Privatization (SWAMP) Campaign has been an unqualified success in mobilizing AFGE members and federal employees generally against the contractors and their cronies in the legislative and executive branches. We will be continuing to build support for the Truthfulness, Responsibility, and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act (H.R. 721) in the 107th Congress.

Contractors may have stuffed a lot of taxpayer dollars in their pockets, but all of the most highly-paid public relations flacks in the world can't conceal the fact that federal service contracting is a pork-barrel, corporate welfare spending boondoggle mired in a stinking, toxic swamp of waste, fraud, and abuse. We know we're right. Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, know we're right. However, lawmakers won't stand up to the contractor bullies—with the big wallets, the small brains, and the even smaller hearts—if we're not always in their faces, lobbying for TRAC, 24-7.

What can we do to resolve the federal government's "human capital" crisis? Watch out for this one! There is a crisis. But we've got to watch out for how certain people will use this crisis. Pay federal employees less than their worth by violating the Federal Employees Pay

Comparability Act. Impose arbitrary in-house personnel ceilings so agencies stop hiring new employees and fire old employees. Systematically replace federal employees with contractor employees, irrespective of the impacts on costs and services. Do all of that year after year after year, and you're obviously going to have a "human capital" crisis: agencies that are already critically understaffed will rapidly become even more so when large parts of an already older work force reach retirement age. This crisis didn't happen overnight. And it didn't happen by accident.

What's the solution to the "human capital" crisis?

Well, please see above. If lawmakers and Administration officials truly want to recruit and retain a qualified federal work force, what do they have to do? They've got to pay us what we're worth. They've got to provide us with a health insurance plan where the premium increases don't devour our pay increases. They've got to end the wholesale contracting out and privatization of the federal government. And they've got to allow federal employees and their union representatives to work in partnership with management to make the federal government an even better service provider.

In other words, they must embrace AFGE's own legislative agenda. As always seems to be the case, what's good for federal employees is good for the federal government. But, like I said, you've got to watch out for this one. Some politicians will use the crisis as an excuse to push a variety of anti-federal employee proposals and just, more or less, gut every single Title 5 protection. For the most part, these are the politicians who made the "human capital" crisis possible. Allowing them to come up with the solution to the "human capital" crisis is like allowing a malpracticing doctor another crack at killing off the patient. Instead of selling the Congress their "civil service reform" snake oil, they ought to be running for cover, hiding their heads in shame, resigned to living squalid lives of disgrace and dishonor for what they have done to the federal government and its work force.

That's AFGE's legislative agenda. Sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? However, too much is at stake for us to neglect our duty to federal employees, taxpayers, and the millions and millions of ordinary Americans who depend on us every day for important services. And, unlike in previous years, we know exactly who our enemies are and what we need to do to take them on. When things get complicated and times get tough, just remember this: we're right, they're wrong, and we will beat them. And, obviously, the more people who are fighting on our side, the tougher we'll make it for our enemies.

Whether or not you're an AFGE member, it's true the big fights for federal employees will still be the same. However, if you join AFGE it will indisputably help us to prevail in the big fights to boost our pay, reduce our health care expenses, and end the threat from contracting out. That's why every federal employee should join AFGE.

What are some issues in government that concern you?



William Roach
Vice President, Local 2510
Member for 4 years
DFAS
Charleston, S.C.

If given the opportunity to sit down and talk with Senators **Strom Thurmond** (R-S.C.) and **Ernest Hollings** (D-S.C.), I would like them to know that government employees do better work than contractors, dollar-for-dollar. Stop contracting out jobs.



Verna Washington
Member, Local 1411
Member for almost 30 years
DFAS
Indianapolis

There are so many things out there on the table that I'm concerned about—the possibility of the government closing buildings, health insurance, benefits, etc. I'm also concerned about people not being able to gain access to government services and programs, like many senior citizens.



Jim Broz
President, Local 40
Member of Local for 29 years
INS
Renton, Wash.

Respect for employees. Employees know the best way to do the work and are asked last how to get the work done. Additionally, immigration inspectors should be designated law enforcement officers to receive more equitable retirement options.

Union Insights... Union Insights...

AFGE-The Government Standard Vol. 17, No. 2 March/April 2001
AFGE-The Government Standard (USPS 003-219, ISSN 1041-5335) is published bimonthly and is the official membership publication of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, 80 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20001 Phone: (202) 737-8700, www.afge.org

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Produced by the AFGE Communications Dept.; Director/Editor, Magda Lynn Seymour; Assistant Director, Diane Witiak; Managing Editor & Communications Specialist, John Irvine; Design Editor/Graphics Specialist, Wendy Pope; Staff Assistant, Kim Kennedy. Union-printed by Mount Vernon Printing Co., Landover, Md. Periodicals Postage Paid at Washington, D.C. Postmaster: send address changes to AFGE-The Government Standard, AFGE Data Processing Dept. 80 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

Benefits of Being an AFGE Member

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Program not available for residents of AK, ID, ME, MS, NH, ND, SD, VT, WY or outside the continental U.S., except HI.



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Save on Prescriptions and Vision Care

Through the Union Plus Health Savings program, AFGE members can save:

- up to 40 percent on prescriptions at more than 26,000 participating pharmacies nationwide,
- up to 40 percent on vision-care, frames, glasses and contact lenses, at over 9,000 optometrists, and
- up to 50 percent on a mail-order pharmacy option.

This program also has a 24-hour Nurse HelpLine where members can call and get answers to health-related questions. The HelpLine is staffed with registered nurses who provide health education information, advice and support. An extensive Health Library, which provides recordings about a variety of health-related topics, is also available.

Advantages: Members who specifically request the *mail-order pharmacy only* will not be charged an annual fee. Free enrollment is also available if you register with your AFGE Union Plus Credit Card. Additionally, quarterly statements with a summary of your purchases and savings will be included.

Cost: Members who currently have an AFGE Union Plus Credit Card and use it to enroll are offered a special, no-fee membership. Members who do not have an AFGE Union Plus Credit Card (or elect to use another card to enroll) will be charged an annual fee of \$29.95. Members who pay the \$29.95 annual fee receive exclusive access to the 24-hour Nurse HelpLine and Health Library. AFGE members who use their Union Plus Credit Card to enroll in the program, must pay the \$29.95 fee if they want to use the Nurse HelpLine and Health Library. **Mail order pharmacy portion of the program available at no cost, upon request.**

Enrollment: To enroll or receive more information, call (800) 228-3523. Please have your credit or debit card available when you call.

www.afge.org

AFGE Legal News



AFGE Appeals Deregulation of Food Inspection

On February 5, 2001, AFGE appealed the recent decision of U.S. District Judge **Royce Lamberth** in a case challenging the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) attempted deregulation of meat and poultry inspection.

This will be the second time that this case has been brought to the U.S. Court of Appeals, which had previously overturned Judge Lamberth's decision allowing the USDA to proceed with its so-called experiment with industry self-inspection.

"AFGE has appealed Judge Lamberth's ruling because we strongly believe that American consumers are best protected when federal inspectors, not industry employees, carry out meat and poultry inspection," said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**.

In its earlier decision, the Court of Appeals held that federal meat and poultry laws clearly require that a federal inspector closely examine each carcass slaughtered for human consumption to determine whether it is adulterated. The Appeals Court then remanded the case back to the District Court for an order consistent with its opinion.

"We strongly believe that American consumers are best protected when federal inspectors, not industry employees, carry out meat and poultry inspection."

—Bobby L. Harnage
National President

Openly disagreeing with the Court of Appeals that the meat and poultry laws plainly establish the government's inspection function, Judge Lamberth ruled, instead, that the laws were sufficiently ambiguous to permit USDA

to delegate its statutory inspection duty to the industry.

AFGE represents 5,300 federal food inspectors.

Redstone Arsenal Fails To Maintain & Staff Fire Departments

AFGE Files Suit

In late December, AFGE filed suit in U.S. District Court seeking a Declaratory Judgment at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., over regulations pertaining to the operation and administration of its fire departments [Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6055.6] and use of term and temporary appointments (5 CFR Part 316).

AFGE's National Office and **Local 1858** lawsuit challenges Redstone's failure to maintain five fire companies as mandated by the regulations based on response time criteria and the estimated fire flow requirements to various structures on the facility. Redstone occupies more than 12 million square feet of Army structures. In addition, its tenant, the **George C. Marshall Space**

Flight Center (NASA), occupies over four million square feet of building space.

"The safety situation at Redstone Arsenal is severe. It's equivalent to our hometowns not having adequate fire and emergency services," said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. "What makes this situation worse is that the Arsenal houses fuels, hydraulic fluids, motorized missile launchers and radiation hazards."

Redstone has also failed to adequately staff the three companies it claims to maintain. Additionally, some of its firefighters have been hired under term appointments even though the purposes for which term appointments can be made do not cover those in the DoD fire service.

The suit asks the Court to order Redstone Arsenal to comply with the regulations by maintaining and fully staffing—at a

minimum—five fire companies comprised of permanent employees.

"Employees and others have the right to reasonable protection against the risk of injury or death resulting from fire," added Harnage. "Redstone's failure to comply with the regulations has denied them this right. As a result, firefighters face an unnecessary risk of injury or death in the performance of their duties because of Redstone's blatant disregard for the regulations."

A favorable decision in the suit (*AFGE, et. al. v. United States, et. al.*, Case No. 00CV003001) filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on December 15, 2000, would be the first judicial decision upholding the staffing requirements of the DoDI.

AFGE Goes to Bat for Guard & Reserve Employees in DoJ

AFGE filed an appeal on January 26, 2001, with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) against the Department of Justice (DoJ) for discriminating against DoJ employees who also serve in the National Guard and Reserve. The named appellants in the class appeal are four employees of the Bureau of Prisons (BoP).

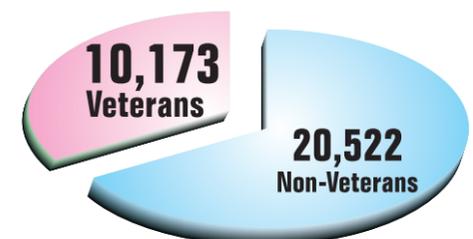
The primary issue in the appeal is the charging of military and annual leave for non-workdays and holidays that fall during a period of reserve duty. DoJ personnel regulations authorized this practice for several years and continue to authorize it even though federal law was recently amended to prohibit it. The appeal alleges that charging this leave violates the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. AFGE is seeking backpay for these employees.

"The National Guard and Reserve are an integral part of our defense forces, as well as welcome relief to millions of Americans during times of national emergency," said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. "DoJ is dissuading men and women from serving their country in this capacity with these burdensome personnel regulations."

According to the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), more than half of the men and women serving in our armed forces are members of the National Guard and Reserve. They meet the same standards as their active duty counterparts. However, because they do not serve full-time, the cost to the government is far less.

BoP employees are particularly committed to the military. Of the 30,675 BoP employees, 33.1

Total Employees in BoP: 30,675



■ Total Employees in BoP with Veteran Status
■ Total Employees in BoP without Veteran Status

(Source: OPM)

percent have veteran's status. Total federal civilian distribution by veteran status in the executive branch (non-postal) agencies worldwide, as of September 30, 1998, was 468,817—26.7 percent.



A Financially Stable Union is Our First Priority

By National Secretary-Treasurer Jim Davis

Let me first say, being elected as your National Secretary-Treasurer is the highest honor ever bestowed upon me. It is no small task for an individual to be elected to this position in August, to relocate, make the needed transitions at their Local and Council, and then have to prepare a \$30 million-plus budget, complete with supporting documentation, for National Executive Council (NEC) review 70-days later. However, we were able to present the NEC with the financial information required to make budgetary projections.

We have a lot of work to do in the next three years. A financially stable union is our first priority. Each month, AFGE carries a \$1 million delinquency in per capita tax payments from our Locals. We have developed a plan to aggressively collect this debt. We have produced a newsletter that will be sent quarterly to the Local leadership to keep them

updated and informed. We are also taking advantage of today's technology by using the AFGE Web site to electronically provide our Local officers with the tools they need to perform their fiscal responsibilities. Right now, with the click of a mouse, membership rosters can be viewed and downloaded. The feedback we are receiving from the officers who have used this asset has been positive and they are asking for more of it.

Speaking of new technology, we are faced with replacing our antiquated accounting and membership system. Before the plans for conversion can begin, we must define our needs as well as those of the Locals and Councils, and we have started this process. We expect the membership cards to be mailed to each member by the end of February. Cards for members with addresses coded as "undeliverable" or "bad" will be sent directly to the Local. If you do not receive your card, please contact your Local. I look forward to our work together.

AFGE News You Can Use

2001 Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference

AFGE's 2001 Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference will be held in Washington, D.C., April 1-3, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. Look for more information about the Conference on AFGE's Web site, www.afge.org.

TV-Turnoff Week, April 23-29

Did you know that too much TV has been linked to increased obesity and related health problems, violence and other negative behavior? Did you know that it also affects academic achievement? Plan other activities such as playing games, going to recitals, concerts, sporting events, fairs, or simply enjoying a good book. If you have children, let them plan a few activities. For more information, check out www.tvturnoff.org or call (202) 518-5556. You could also visit the *Family Fun* section of AFGE's Web site at www.afge.org.



Upcoming 2001 Human Rights Training Conference

The 2001 AFGE Human Rights Training Conference will be held in St. Louis May 7-11, 2001, at the St. Louis Radisson Hotel & Suites. For more information, contact AFGE's Women's & Fair Practices Departments by e-mail at eeo@afge.org or by telephone at (202) 639-6417 or 6418. A detailed agenda and registration form can also be found at AFGE's Web site, www.afge.org, in the *Women's/Fair Practices* section.

Dates to Remember

MARCH

12-16 4th Dist. Training, Virginia Beach, Va.
14-17 12th Dist. Training, Las Vegas
20-23 St. Louis Area Council Training,

APRIL

5 NEC Meeting, Washington, D.C.
8-20 12th Dist. Metro, Tucson, Ariz.
16-20 6th Dist. Mini Metro, Columbus/Chillicothe, Ohio
22-May 4 5th Dist. Metro, Birmingham, Ala.
30-May 4 Dist. 9 & 11 Training, Alaska

MAY

1-11 12th Dist. Metro, Los Angeles
13-18 3rd Dist. Metro, Mechanicsburg, Pa.,
13-25 10th Dist. Metro, Dallas
14-17 8th Dist. Seminar, Coralville, Iowa

JUNE

10-22 12th Dist. Metro, San Diego
10-22 7th Dist. Metro, Chicago
11-15 Multi Dist. 4, 5, 6 & 14 Training, Gatlinburg, Tenn.
17-29 5th Dist. Metro, Columbia, S.C.
17-29 6th Dist. Metro, Indianapolis
18-22 10th Dist. Off. Training, Albuquerque



AFGE-Backed Firefighter Bill Passes U.S. House Companion Bill Introduced in U.S. Senate by Senator Feinstein (D-Calif.)



A bill by Rep. **Elton Gallegly** (R-Calif.) that would raise the retirement age for federal firefighters and keep experienced firefighters on the line passed the House of Representatives unanimously on January 30, 2001. H.R. 93 was the first bill passed by the House in the 107th Congress. AFGE endorsed the bill.

The Federal Firefighters Retirement Age Fairness Act would raise the retirement age for federal firefighters from age 55 to 57, bringing it in line with the retirement regulations for federal law enforcement officers. It encompasses two issues that cross partisan lines: fairness and public safety. It was for that reason that the bill was approved unanimously.

"This legislation is fair to federal firefighters since it would not change the minimum age to retire with full benefits," said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. "Additionally, at a time when the federal government's fire fighting capability is being sorely tested, it is imperative we make it possible for agencies to retain experienced, qualified federal firefighters."

California is home to the most federal firefighters in the nation, followed by Virginia and Texas. More than 60 members of Congress cosponsored the bill before it was approved on a 401-0 vote by the House.

The current retirement age was instituted when unemployment was high and life expectancies were lower. Today, the federal work force is tight and Americans are living longer and healthier lives. In addition, it takes an estimated 12 to 17 years to train for senior fire management positions. In 1999, 57 percent of U.S. Forest Service firefighters were 45 or older.

The bill has the added bonus of saving the federal government an estimated \$4 million over five years. Companion legislation (S. 271) was introduced in the Senate by **Dianne Feinstein** (D-Calif.) in mid-February. AFGE members should urge their Senators to cosponsor S. 271. AFGE firefighters should note that this legislation does not require them to remain in service until they are 57. Rather, it merely allows them to make that choice.

AFGE Supports the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001

AFGE officially endorsed the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001, introduced by Senator **Edward Kennedy** (D-Mass.) and Representative **David Bonior** (D-Mich.), in early February.

"AFGE supports the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001 because many federal employees would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage," said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. "The hourly pay rate of many federal employees—including food service employees, janitors, nursing assistants and file clerks—is connected to the minimum wage both directly and indirectly."

The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2001 would raise the hourly minimum wage to \$5.75 an hour 30 days after enactment, to \$6.25 an hour on January 1, 2002, and to \$6.65 an hour on January 1, 2003.

AFGE believes that Congress needs to change the minimum wage and raise the pay of the lowest paid federal employees. Many employees have not seen any real increases in their paychecks for years because their pay is tied to local prevailing wages. Even though the hourly rate for these employees exceeds the current minimum, the pay of these federal employees will improve because their counterparts in the private sector would see an increase in their pay.

"For low-wage workers in the federal government, raising the minimum wage means they might be able to afford the increases in health care premiums for federal employees," added Harnage.

On The

Partnerships Assaulted National Partnership Council Abolished

(continued from page 1)

"Partnerships have led to increased efficiency and service to the public. Costs have been reduced while customer service has dramatically improved, and so has employee morale. It is apparent that Bush wants to return to the outmoded and arcane top-down, decision-making management theories developed in the late 1800s," said Harnage. "Bush's willingness to allow his advisors to carry out personal agendas and vendettas to tear down something both management and labor supported is a clear signal that he is not the "uniter" he professed to be during the campaign.

"Labor-management partnerships are not a Democratic or Republican issue. The concept was embraced by those on both sides of the aisle who realize the importance of incorporating into the federal sector those cooperative programs that have been so successful in the private sector. In fact, the labor/management relations program we have today in government is based on the program created when former President **Richard Nixon** issued Executive Order 11491 in 1969.

"The federal government is this nation's largest unionized work force with approximately 80 percent of eligible federal employees covered by collective bargaining relationships. It is not only appropriate, but essential, that federal workers and their unions be active partners with the Administration if it wants to continue efforts to make government more cost-effective and responsive to the American people.

"Bush's hasty and foolhardy actions give no time for new Cabinet officials to review the benefits of partnership and the billions of dollars that have been saved through partnership.

"AFGE had looked forward to working with the President and his advisors to improve partnerships and collaborative relations between labor and management. The National Partnership Council was created to develop an environment where workers and their ideas were regarded as the valuable assets they are.

"Federal employees want to work for a government that promotes rather than stifles productivity—a customer-service oriented government

Pentagon Admits AFGE Is Right

The Pentagon has finally admitted that AFGE is right in that almost all Department of Defense (DoD) work is given to contractors without any public-private competition whatsoever. In a December 22, 2000, letter to Congress signed by **Jacques Gansler**, the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, it was admitted that:

"(C)ontracts resulting from a cost comparison performed in accordance with OMB Circular A-76 represent an extremely small portion of the total number of service contracts awarded by the Department during fiscal year 1999 (less than 1 percent). Further, these contracts represent a very small portion of the total dollars awarded by DoD to private sector contractors during fiscal year 1999."

"It is imperative that everyone interested in federal service contracting take note of this extraordinary admission," declared National President **Bobby L. Harnage**. "The Pentagon clearly sought to avoid publicizing its admission by submitting the letter at a time when, because of the holidays and the presidential transition, it would receive little attention."

Harnage pointed out that according to the Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General (IG), "From FY 1992 through FY 1999, DoD procurement of services increased from \$39.9 billion to \$51.8

billion annually. The largest subcategory of contracts for services was for professional and management support services, valued at \$10 billion. Spending in this subcategory increased 100 percent between 1992 and 1999."

"At the same time the Pentagon undertook a drastic and unprecedented increase in contracting, federal employees were almost never given the chance to compete in and for work which they could have performed," Harnage added. "Despite all the talk about reforms and efficiencies, the guiding principle of the last eight years has been to give work to employees with contractors regardless of the consequences for taxpayers and the public."

Harnage emphasized that prompt passage of AFGE's Truthfulness, Responsiveness in Contracting (TRAC) Act is critical. "The TRAC Act would require all agencies to subject work to public-private competition before it is given to contractors."

Giving credit to the work of Senators **Richard Durbin** (D-Ill.), **Tom Harkin** (D-Iowa), and **Lautenberg** (D-N.J.), Harnage concluded, "If these Senators had not inserted their amendments (106-53) in the FY 2000 Defense Appropriations Bill at the request of AFGE, DoD would have been forced to come clean about its anti-federal employee, anti-taxpayer and anti-out policy."

The Hill

that directly serves the American people. It would appear that the President is not interested in all that federal employees and their representatives have to offer.”

What does this mean?

Bush's Executive Order to eliminate the National Partnership Council **DOES NOT** require existing labor/management partnerships to be disbanded. Agencies are still permitted to form partnerships (or whatever else they may wish to call their collaborative relationships) with their unions, as well as bargain over the 7106 (b)(1) matters, offer training and involve employees and their unions, pre-decisionally, in identifying problems and crafting solutions.

Although Bush's Executive Order does direct OPM and agency heads to rescind any orders, rules, implementing or enforcing Clinton's 1993 E.O., it **DOES NOT** mean that agencies are forced to disband current partnerships and reverse collaborative policies or guidelines. By law, labor and management have roles they are required to play in the work place, roles that naturally cause the parties to interrelate with each other. The parties are free to choose to relate in a cooperative fashion.

Four Executive Orders Attack Unions

1. Eliminate so-called project labor agreements requiring workers on federal projects to receive union-negotiated wages.
2. Require federal contractors to notify their employees about their "Beck" rights to demand rebates on the portion of their union dues used for politics or lobbying.
3. Eliminate the National Partnership Council.
4. Eliminate a requirement that federal project workers whose companies go out of business be hired by the companies that continue the project.

Professional, administrative category increased by 54

increase in service to in defense of their jobs all the talk from the Pentagon as been replacing federal warfighters.”

responsibility, and Accountability agencies, including DoD, to

Markin (D-Iowa) and Frank this report requirement , DoD would never have anti-warfighter contracting

Pentagon Fraud

“...The actual amount of fraud overall at the Pentagon is much higher than is being reported because the number of government personnel overseeing the defense plants has dropped precipitously in the last decade. As a result of the downsized oversight staff and a philosophy that says companies and their customers in government are 'partners,' the Defense Criminal Investigative Service is learning about fewer and fewer crimes.”

Donald Mancuso, former-Acting Pentagon Inspector General, in *Defense News*



TRAC Act Introduced (continued from page 1)

A list of the 106th cosponsors can be found on AFGE's Web site in the *Members-Only* portion of the site, under the *Legislation* section. A link to the lawmakers will be highlighted at the top of that page. Additionally, a detailed summary of the TRAC Act can be found in the *Legislation* section by clicking on the link entitled "Issues and Legislation" and then selecting "Legislative Alerts & Updates."

The phone number for your House member, as well as a pre-written e-mail message urging your lawmaker to cosponsor the TRAC Act, can be found by entering your zip code in the "Elected Officials" link at the beginning of the *Legislation* section and clicking the Go button.

Supporting this critically important legislation matters to the future of government work in America.

The TRAC Act

The 107th Congress' version of the Truthfulness, Responsibility, and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act (H.R. 721) is almost exactly the same as last year's bill that attracted the support of 204 cosponsors. However, there are four differences:

1. New: Contracts performed for federal agencies by the blind and the handicapped are exempted from the temporary suspension. Those contracts must be immediately terminated, however, if it is determined that the work is not actually being performed by the blind or handicapped.
2. New: Contracts for the construction of new structures or the remodeling of or additions to existing structures are excluded from the legislation's applicability. However, contracts for the repair and maintenance of any structures are covered by the legislation.
3. Improved: Contracts that are "critical for patient care" are still exempt from the temporary suspension. However, the term "critical for patient care" is now precisely defined to prevent the Department of Veterans Affairs from wrongly including non-health care-related work within the exception.
4. Improved: The Temporary Suspension, the Requirement for Public-Private Competition, and the Review of Contractor Performance provisions apply only to new work and work performed by federal employees—not work currently performed by contractors. This is the same as last year. In order to emphasize the lack of any impact on contracts currently performed by contractors, the new TRAC Act has been redrafted so that the above-referenced provisions would "not apply to work performed by the private sector prior to the date of enactment of this Act."

Bottom Line: There is one big difference between this year's TRAC Act and last year's TRAC Act—as bad as the Clinton Administration was on contracting out and privatization for taxpayers and federal employees, the Bush Administration, based on campaign speeches and literature, will likely be worse, far worse. That makes the TRAC Act even more important. For more information on AFGE's legislative fight against contracting out, go to www.afge.org and click the *Legislation* section or call the Legislation Department at (202) 639-6413.

Health & Safety Watch (continued from page 1)

Opponents Seek to Repeal OSHA Standard

The ergonomics standard is the most significant job safety measure ever issued by OSHA. It will prevent hundreds of thousands of injuries each year by requiring employers to implement ergonomics programs and fix jobs where musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) occur. The rule is a huge step forward and will bring about major improvements in workplace safety.

Unfortunately, the same big business groups and members of Congress that waged a relentless campaign to try to stop the ergonomics standard from being issued are now gearing up to repeal the rule. House Republican Majority leader Rep. **Dick Armey** (R-Texas) and Senator **Mike Enzi** (R-Wy.) have vowed to introduce legislation to overturn the standard.

What You Can Do to Defend the Ergonomics Standard

The battle to defend the ergonomics standard must begin immediately. AFGE members are needed to build broad public and Congressional support for this important worker protection. Please join the fight to stop opponents' efforts to take away this hard won protection.

Share the information about the importance of shielding this new worker safety standard from attack. Urge your friends and neighbors to join this effort. Contact local reporters and write letters-to-the-editor to let the public know why workers in your community need these protections.

Call or write your members of Congress, as well as the Bush Administration, and inform them that workers need and deserve these protections to prevent crippling workplace injuries. Ask them to support the OSHA ergonomics standard and to oppose any attempts to take away this necessary worker protection. A copy of the standard and background information can be found on OSHA's Web site at www.osha.gov.

Chicago Local Holds First Steward's Training



Council of Prisons **Local 3652**, in conjunction with **District 7**, held its very first Steward's Training at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in November of 2000. Some of the attendees included (l-r) **A. Joiner, W. Smith, G. Traynere, T. Luter, R. Walker, T. Hines, B. Bowens, G. Mills, K. Muller, M. Rule, E. Rhymes,** and **M. Cross**. As a result of the success of the training, Local 3652 is already looking forward to continued training classes in 2001 and beyond.

Marsh Wins Florida AFL-CIO Labor Award

In early December, **Matthew Marsh**, AFGE's Florida State Council President and member of **SSA Local 4056** in Jacksonville, Fla., was presented the Year 2000 **Joe Broxton** Memorial Award for outstanding service to the community and to the labor movement by the North Central Florida Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO). Marsh has labor accomplishments spanning over a dozen years and is always there when needed by sister unions. According to **District 5** National Vice President **Mary Lynn Walker**, "We are especially proud of Matthew and happy to see him win the award. He is a dedicated unionist, devoting a great deal of time to others, as well as to AFGE."



AFGE NEWS

2001 Member Star Search

We're here to report what you're doing! What role do you play in the nation's government? Send a story and picture to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: 2001 Star Search, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Be sure to list your roles, responsibilities and the ways you help American citizens. And if you're sending a photo, please be sure to identify everyone. All photos and stories become property of the AFGE Communications Department.

Local 2219 Helps Member

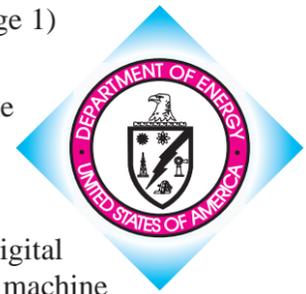
On February 4, 2001, **Local 2219** in Lincoln, Neb., held a benefit for **Dave Snyder**, an AFGE member who lost his wife, Darlene, in a house fire. Darlene was a well-known animal advocate who founded CARES, a program that takes care of abandoned or abused animals. Several animals, mostly monkeys rescued from abused homes, perished in the fire that destroyed the Snyder home.

Local 2219 helped Snyder get back on his feet by coordinating a music event at VFW Post 13 in Lincoln. With the help of donations from local businesses, volunteer bands and a volunteer auctioneer, the Local was able to raise \$905.00 in three hours for Snyder.

"AFGE members rise to the challenge on a daily basis," said Local President **Barbara Jordan**. "And, sometimes we have to take time to help out one of our own. We took the time to open our hearts and we made a difference."

Member-Inventor (continued from page 1)

The *Chicago Tribune* called the awards the "Oscars of Invention." Others have referred to the R&D 100 Awards as the "Nobel Prizes of Applied Research"—and there's a reason why. Past winners (since 1963) have included breakthroughs like Polacolor film, the flashcube, the digital wristwatch, antilock brakes, the automated teller machine (ATM), the liquid crystal display (LCD), the halogen lamp, the fax machine and high definition TV (HDTV). "Ranjani is NETL's first R&D 100 Award winner," said Local 1995 member **Heather M. Quedenfeld**. "The whole organization is proud of her."



"I joined AFGE because I felt the union could do a lot for me—it has provided some help since I joined in 1996," said Siriwardane. Since 1994, Siriwardane has focused her energy on creating a substance that will leach sulfur out of a product. Her goal was to find a way to burn coal while eliminating sulfur dioxide emissions, which have been blamed for acid rain. Power plants now have to install expensive scrubber systems or use low sulfur coal to meet clean air standards. But Siriwardane's pencil eraser-sized pellets, known by the technical description "RVS-1: the regenerable desulfurization sorbent," could mean a different look for the nation's future power plants. "I was surprised when the tests happened perfectly," said Siriwardane.

Using a sorbent to remove sulfur is not a new idea. What is new about RVS-1 is that it removes nearly all the sulfur. RVS-1, which looks like bunny chow and is also called "magic rocks," acts like a sponge to remove sulfur from gasified coal used to power turbines that generate electricity. Aside from withstanding high temperatures of gasification, it can be used over and over again and is said to cost up to 50 times less than competing products.



Magic Rocks

"I was very honored by the award," said Siriwardane, "and very excited about future research opportunities." Siriwardane received her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in 1981 and has been married for 22 years to husband **Hema**. They have an 18-year-old daughter, **Nishani**, and a 13-year-old son, **Emil**.

Local 2525 President Recognized



Shirley Carson

Hats off to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) **Local 2525**

President **Shirley Carson** of Shreveport, La., for being accepted by *The National Registry of Who's Who* as a life member. Acceptance of Carson as a life member is in recognition of her exemplary service to her community, to AFGE for 22 years and to the DVA. Congratulations!

Sen. Voinovich [R-Ohio] Supports Partnerships

In a hearing on Feb. 1, 2001, before the Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Government Management, Senator **George Voinovich** (R-Ohio) urged officials of the Bush Administration to familiarize themselves with the valuable results that successful labor/management partnerships provide to the taxpayers. "The message that I am trying to get across is that labor and management coming together to talk at the table is very, very good for the people who benefit from government services," said Voinovich. (see *On The Hill*, page 6-7)