



## OMB Issues Un-FAIR Guidance to Agencies

President **George W. Bush** is aggressively implementing a pro-contractor agenda. **Sean O’Keefe**, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), issued guidance in March advising agencies to use OMB Circular A-76 to convert to contractor performance or subject to public/private competition at least five percent of all jobs on the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act inventories list during fiscal year 2002.

The OMB guidance revealed that ultimately, the Bush Administration wants to put up for grabs the jobs of 425,000 federal employees.

Ironically, the OMB guidance was issued to agencies just days before Republican and Democratic lawmakers on the House Readiness Subcommittee criticized the Department of Defense (DoD)—the agency that has utilized A-76 the most in government—for mismanaging the A-76 effort and for making unsubstantiated claims of savings.

“Bush is spreading DoD’s A-76 ‘virus’ throughout the federal government,” said National President **Bobby Harnage**. “Heaven help us.”

## Local 1482 Wins A-76

AFGE members at the Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) in Barstow, Calif., won an A-76 contract in March to operate the base’s maintenance and repair services, transportation, utilities and engineering activities. The decision, which saved 143 jobs, was welcome news to the employees who operate the Installation and Logistics Department.

“We were fortunate that we

had a Colonel (**Mark A. Costa**) who fostered an environment in which we could win,” said **Local 1482** President **Chris Moya**.

Several AFGE members played a critical role in the win, including past President **Leroy Sanchez** and member **John Noxon**. The Local hopes they can provide assistance for others going through the A-76 process. (see **Local 1482 Wins A-76 Study** on page 4)



## AFGE Wins DVA Election

After talking with thousands of Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) employees at more than 30 medical centers and regional offices throughout the country, AFGE was chosen as the employees’ collective bargaining representative on March 8. Eleven days later, the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) officially certified AFGE as the representative for the non-professional unit of 10,000 employees.

“The official FLRA certification brings solid strength to the thousands of non-professional DVA employees who voted for AFGE,” said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**.

The win represents the largest election of this type to be held in the federal sector since the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act in



DVA workers voted for AFGE Now!

1978. AFGE already represents over 125,000 DVA employees nationwide. The addition of 10,000 employees to the non-professional unit brings to 60 percent the number of DVA employees represented by AFGE. (see **AFGE Wins** on page 3)

## Pentagon Uses 734,000 Contractors

The Defense Department hires the equivalent of more than 700,000 employees annually to perform tasks under service contracts ranging from mowing grass at military bases to testing key weapon systems, according to a new Pentagon report.

“The Department of Defense relies heavily on contracted labor for the performance of services,” according to a March 12 Defense report required by Congress. In the fiscal 2000 Defense authorization act, the Pentagon was required to come up with a detailed accounting of all its service contractors.

The report found that Defense hires the equivalent of about 734,000 employees annually to perform the service work—a number greater than the 640,000 civilians who work for Defense as federal employees. (see **Pentagon Uses 734,000** on page 6)

## 2001 Legislative & Grassroots Conference



AFGE members hop on the U.S. Senate subway during Lobby Day. For more coverage, see **Members Make It Happen** on LC1.

## INSIDE

A Message From President Harnage . . .	2
Benefits of Being an AFGE Member . . .	3
AFGE Legal News . . . . .	4
Working Together . . . . .	4
Legislative Conference Coverage . .	LC1
Conference Photos . . . . .	LC2-3
List Project Underway . . . . .	LC4
News You Can Use . . . . .	5

Health & Safety Watch . . . . .	5
On The Hill . . . . .	6-7
Contractors Protest TRAC Act . . . . .	6
On The Record With . . . . .	7
Rep. <b>Ciro Rodriguez</b> (D-Texas)	
Rep. <b>Steny Hoyer</b> (D-Md.)	
Rep. <b>Al Wynn</b> (D-Md.)	
AFGE NEWS . . . . .	8



The **George W. Bush** tax cut package should be at or near the top of every AFGE activist's list of priorities. Nobody has a greater stake in the outcome of this vote than federal employees. Although we as a group are among the least likely to benefit from his plan to lower income tax rates and eliminate estate taxes, we will be first in line to suffer the consequences.

Our experience in the aftermath of **Ronald Reagan's** 1981 tax cuts tells us most of what we need to know. Corporations and wealthy individuals got a bonanza and we got stuck with the bill. Paying off the deficit caused by Reagan's tax cuts has taken the rest of us close to twenty years—twenty years of **job cuts, retirement system cuts, health insurance benefit cuts, blue and white collar pay adjustment cuts, agency budget cuts, and program cuts.**

And there is no question that the consequences of the Bush tax package will be a rerun of the spending cuts we experienced after Reagan's 1981 "trickle down" disaster. In 1981, we were told that tax cuts would lead to so much economic growth that revenue would actually increase. This time we have gotten a mish-mash of arguments from "starve the beast (government)" to "give the people their money back" to "revive this economy." Let's take a look at what each of these arguments actually mean.

"**Starve the beast**" was a line used by Bush's chief economic advisor **Lawrence Lindsay** during the 2000 presidential campaign to explain why an apparently unpopular tax cut was the heart of his candidate's economic plan. He explained that the idea was to deprive politicians of the money to fund both new and

# The Bush Tax Cut and Federal Employees

## A Message From President Bobby L. Harnage

existing government programs and benefits which may prove popular. After all, if Congress invested the surplus in public programs such as Medicare, Social Security, education, and highways, the federal government would be strengthened and people would be better off. Public investments are well known to strengthen support for the government, and therefore make it all the harder subsequently to make the case for privatization or elimination. When public programs are underfunded, they lose popular support and the case for elimination or privatization is easier to make.

### "Give the people their money back"

has been another favorite slogan of Bush tax cut advocates. This can be challenged in two ways: 1) who is really getting their money back in a tax cut and 2) who gets their money back when tax revenues are used for public investments rather than tax cuts. The graph to the right shows who will benefit from the Bush tax cut package and by how much. The numbers show the tax cut as a percent of after-tax income.

The top richest one percent, those with pre-tax household incomes averaging \$785,993, would get 39 percent of the total value of Bush's tax cuts. The top one percent gets more than ten times as much as those in the lowest 20 percent and as much as the bottom 80 percent combined.

In contrast, several alternative uses of the surplus which emphasize a combination of tax cuts targeted to working families and public investments have a large impact on those in the bottom 80 percent of the income distribution, *where most if not all*

*federal employees reside.* Proposed public investments such as prescription drug coverage for those in Medicare; subsidized health insurance coverage for the uninsured; federal grants to lower class size in public schools and build new public schools; increases in the number of inspectors in meat, poultry, and other food processing plants; increasing the number of inspectors to monitor compliance with wage and hour and workplace safety regula-

assumption about economic growth that Bush's Social Security Trustees used in their annual report issued March 19, 2001, the non-Social Security budget surplus would be \$1.5 trillion less!

Either the economy is healthy and CBO is right to project 3.0 percent annual growth and a \$3.1 trillion surplus over 10 years, or the economy is slowing and the Social Security Trustees (the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor,

HHS, and the Social Security Commissioner—all Bush appointees) are right to project 2.4 percent annual growth and a \$1.6 trillion surplus over ten years. Or perhaps neither is right. What if capital gains tax revenues fall as a consequence of dot-com millionaires' paper profits disappearing? What if the recession in the manufacturing sector spreads to other sectors as deregulation

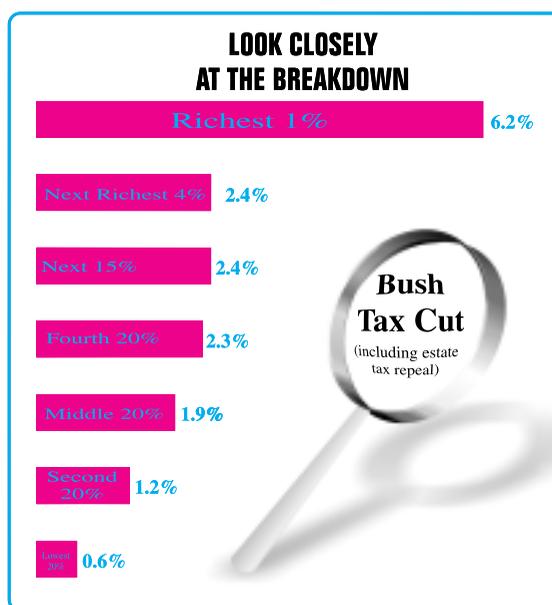
drives up energy costs and firms begin to lay off workers?

If these scenarios play out and the rosy surpluses do not measure up to yesterday's projections, the Bush tax cut will only make things worse. Tax cuts only help revive the econ-

omy if they are spent on job-producing investment. They do not help if they are used on bidding up already overpriced stocks or on the purchase of luxury imports. Bush's tax cuts are designed to deprive the government of the ability not only to run effective, high quality programs and agencies, but also to serve its historic role in "priming the pump" through investments in infrastructure and social insurance—the traditional ways the government has provided the foundation for economic growth that benefits all citizens.

Whether its "starving the beast" or giving the "people their money back" or "reviving this economy," the real answer for federal employees is that regardless of who gets what from the Bush tax cut, if it goes forward, *we will pay the price.* Federal employees will pay in lost jobs, lost pay raises, health insurance cuts, retirement cuts and losses due to contracting out.

No one should be fooled into thinking that Bush and this Congress are trying to give federal employees the pay raise through tax cuts that they won't give up front through FEPCA. That's the bottom line.



tions—the list goes on. These investments provide more to working families than any pitance they might get from Bush's tax cut.

"**Revive the economy**" is the most recent rationale for what is now being measured, conservatively, as a \$2.4 trillion tax cut over 10 years. As I write this, the stock market bubble is bursting, the manufacturing sector is in recession and the President is talking about an energy crisis. But the economic assumptions being offered by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) include 3.0 percent annual rate of growth over the next 10 years. The assumption of 3.0 percent annual growth is the foundation of projections for the on-budget surplus that is being offered up on the Bush tax cut. Without that assumption, CBO's \$3.1 trillion surplus falls away. For example, if CBO were to use the same

## AFGE Wins (continued from page 1)

“The dedicated federal employees who are keeping America’s promise to our nation’s veterans recognized the need for collective AFGE action,” added Harnage. “Whether the issue is better pay for employees at DVA medical centers and regional offices or a fully funded DVA budget, our union is leading the way.”

Alma Lee, President of AFGE’s National DVA Council, hailed the win as a victory not just for the employees, but for DVA programs overall. “The stronger AFGE’s voice is on Capitol Hill, the better able we are to protect the DVA’s mission of caring for our veterans,” said Lee.

In order to declare a winner in an election, the FLRA requires that the frontrunner receive 50 percent, plus one vote, of all the ballots cast. As a result, some 3,800 DVA doctors, dentists, nurses and other professionals will have to vote again to secure AFGE representation.

DVA Election Totals	
<b>NON-PROFESSIONAL UNIT</b>	
AFGE	2,524
I.A.M./N.F.F.E.	1,680
No Union	141
Unresolved Challenge Ballots	70
<b>PROFESSIONAL UNIT</b>	
AFGE	700
I.A.M./N.F.F.E.	693
No Union	95
Unresolved Challenge Ballots	50

(Source: FLRA, March 8, 2001)



AFGE supporters at San Francisco VA.



Above: Dr. Sonny Wells (l) of Martinsburg, W. Va., speaking with a DVA employee on the campaign trail.

Right: The AFGE National DVA Council campaign staff celebrate the official FLRA totals.



AFGE campaign event, DVA Medical Center, Northport, Long Island.

## What's Next?

- 1) AFGE and NFFE/IAM were the top vote-getters in the election for the professional employees. This means that the FLRA will conduct a run-off election beginning May 23, 2001, to allow the professionals to choose AFGE.
- 2) AFGE will continue to share information about important issues facing DVA employees.
- 3) AFGE representatives will be meeting with workers in the non-professional unit who are interested in helping the new union get up and running. If you want to join the effort, contact **Tee Williams** in the AFGE Membership & Organization Department at (888) 844-AFGE.



## Benefits of Being an AFGE Member

### GROUP SAVINGS PLUS®

*The auto and home insurance advantage*

As an AFGE member, you can save money on auto and home insurance premiums with the Group Savings Plus® program, available to you through Liberty Mutual. Thanks to AFGE's group buying power, members can enjoy savings and the quality service they deserve. Liberty Mutual was rated #1 in a study in *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine*.

Members may receive an exclusive group discount of up to 10% off Liberty Mutual's already competitive rates. This could save you \$300 or more per year on Liberty's guaranteed annual rates! And, you could benefit from additional savings based on your age, driving experience, and auto equipment.

Take advantage of your AFGE membership. Call Liberty Mutual's Group Savings Plus program, and don't forget to tell your fellow members about this benefit. To obtain a free quote, contact Liberty Mutual at 1-800-781-3093.



### HOW TO USE one of your UNION VALUABLE benefits

Just call 1(800) 633-7834 to save money and hassle when buying a new or used vehicle. Your personal Auto Advisor will help you find the new or used vehicle that fits your needs and budget. Selected dealers sign a "Bill of Rights" agreeing to give AFGE members a great price and provide a no hassle and no haggle buying experience.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR BENEFIT.  
CALL 1(800) 633-7834

# AFGE Legal News

## AFGE Presents A-76 Position to Association of 400,000 Judges & Lawyers

### American Bar Association

Interested in AFGE's position on the critical need for federal employees to have standing to challenge improperly and unfairly run A-76 competitions in court, the American Bar Association (ABA) invited AFGE to make a presentation before the Outsourcing Subsection of the Section on Public Contracts of the ABA in March. AFGE Assistant General Counsel **Martin R. Cohen** presented AFGE's position.

Government contracting lawyers from private firms and federal agencies are increasingly

interested in AFGE's position on this issue. Because of this interest, the head of the ABA Section asked that a similar presentation be made by AFGE to the ABA in Cambridge, Mass., later this year.



AFGE's presentation before the ABA is significant for AFGE's membership because the ABA is recognized as the national representative of the legal profession, serving the public and the profession by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the law. ABA positions play an important role in all law in the United States.

# Big Brother's Watching

## Is Off-Duty Time Your Time? Think Again

Do you think there is a connection (or nexus) between a federal employee's off-duty conduct and his/her job performance? Neither does AFGE. As a result, AFGE has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to accept its appeal of a decision handed down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, [*Brown v. Department of the Navy*, 229 F.3d 1356 (Oct. 20, 2000)].

The Appeals Court affirmed the Marine Corps removal action based on a loss of trust and confidence in the employee's performance as a result of lawful, off-duty conduct. The Court of

Appeals' decision was a confirmation of an earlier decision by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

This case presents the question of whether an employing agency may remove the employee for lawful, off-duty conduct based on claims of a purported loss of trust or confidence that reflects the morals of agency officials in the absence of any evidence.

AFGE argues in its Petition for a Writ of Certiorari (Case No. 00-1496) that by allowing the federal employer to remove an employee for off-duty conduct

because of claims of lost trust or confidence—colored by the distaste experienced by agency officials in response to that off-duty conduct—is tantamount to eliminating the nexus requirement in its entirety.

AFGE points out in its Certiorari that the claims of lost 'trust and confidence' are nothing more than the expressions of personal displeasure by management officials. Under the decisions of federal appellate courts other than the Federal Circuit, such evidence would be deemed insufficient to meet the nexus requirement.

## Local 1482 Wins A-76 Study (continued from Page 1)



Barstow is the first of 16 Marine bases to reach a tentative decision in this study that compares public and private competition. The A-76 study was conducted under guidelines set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The decision can be appealed by the bidders within 30 days.

Originally established as a MCLB during WWII, Barstow is home to over 600 AFGE members. For more information on how your Local can combat the A-76 process, click on the A-76 FAIR Act Resources section (under the Members-Only portion) of AFGE's Web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

## Contractors Capture Citizen Information

People who log on to dozens of federal government Web sites may be unknowingly tracked despite a private policy forbidding it, outlined a report released by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. In one case, a government contractor was given ownership of all information collected from a Web site, the congressional report said.

The report found that 64 federal Web sites used files that allow them to track the browsing and buying habits of Internet users. The Education, Treasury, Energy and Interior Departments used such unauthorized files, as did NASA and the General Services Administration, the report said.

## Working Together



### Please Help Dockworkers in South Carolina

Members of the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) Locals 1422 and 1771 in Charleston, S.C., peacefully protested the introduction of a nonunion stevedore company in late 1999 and early 2000. In response to the peaceful protest, South Carolina's Attorney General mobilized 600 state police, along with armored personnel carriers. A "disturbance" was provoked by the police and workers were hurt and arrested.

The State of South Carolina is charging five ILA members with rioting. As a result, they are facing the prospect of serious jail time. Also, 27 other ILA members are facing civil suits by the nonunion stevedore company, aimed at ruining

their lives, in a mean-spirited act of revenge.

The S.C. AFL-CIO has initiated the *Campaign for Workers' Rights in S.C.* as an effort to build a national defense for these ILA members. The national AFL-CIO is assisting in this effort and is asking for your help. For more information on this struggle, and details regarding the *Campaign for Workers' Rights in S.C.*, please call (803) 798-8300. Contributions to assist in the legal defense of the ILA members may be sent to:

**Dockworkers Defense Fund**  
910 Morrison Drive  
Charleston, S.C. 29403

## Greatest Achievements of the Federal Government in the Twentieth Century



# Generations of AFGE Members Head to Washington, D.C.

## Members Make It Happen

Rookie and veteran AFGE members came to the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., the first three days in April to learn more about the legislative issues being discussed in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress that will affect their jobs, families and futures.

Second year member **Barbara McGonagle**, Legislative Liaison in EPA **Local 3428**, came to D.C. to “find out more about the issues important to our union and to reiterate the issues we care about to our elected officials—issues such as ergonomics, pay, healthcare and partnerships.” McGonagle and other members of the Local visited their elected officials from the greater-Boston area—Senators **Ted Kennedy** (D) and **John Kerry** (D) and Congressmen **Joe Moakley** (D) and **Michael Capuano** (D).

One veteran AFGE member didn't have to travel far—22-year member **McArthur Cheeks** of DoL **Local 12** in Washington, D.C. “I'm attending the Legislative and Grassroots Mobilization Conference to hear AFGE's congressional priorities.” AFGE's legislative agenda, which was officially unveiled at the conference, is made up of issues paramount to government workers, such as the Truthfulness, Responsibility, and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act. The TRAC Act would impose much-needed reforms in how agencies contract for services.

Three members from DVA **Local 2209** in Dayton, Ohio, were at the conference promot-

ing the TRAC Act and DVA issues—President **Doris Randleman**, Recording-Sec. **Tinita Cole** and Chief Steward **Loretta Lewis**. “We're here to talk with Senators **George Voinovich** (R) and **Mike DeWine** (R) and Congressman **Tony Hall** (D) about TRAC and funding for America's veterans,” said Randleman, an 11-year member who has attended six consecutive conferences. Lewis, who's been with AFGE for 22-years, was also interested in talking with her elected officials about Saturday premium pay for DVA workers.

AFGE members learned about AFGE's position on GS and federal blue collar pay, FEHBP, the budget surplus, public investment vs. tax cut, government pension offset and

**Nicklas**, AFGE Issues Mobilization Director. “It's so important that they talk with their members of Congress about the issues affecting their personal and professional lives.”

Before AFGE members hit the halls of Congress, a few lawmakers paid a visit to the conference. Representatives **Al Wynn** (D-Md.), sponsor of the TRAC Act in the 106<sup>th</sup> and 107<sup>th</sup> Congresses, and **Eddie Bernice Johnson** (D-Texas), Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, spoke about the need to promote AFGE's concerns to the group dictating the future of federal workers—Congress. “Let's get fired up,” said Wynn, “and communicate our agenda with members of Congress. If we do, we'll be really successful.” Johnson dis-



National President Bobby Harnage (third from left) with AFGE members before news conference with Representative Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

windfall elimination provisions, prison privatization, and child care.

“It's always exciting when federal employees show how much they can accomplish when they learn about the issues affecting their lives,” said **Bob**

cussed the need for more oversight in the federal government and the need to ensure the tax-paying public is getting the best value.

“Look out Capitol Hill, AFGE's ready to rumble and we know precisely what we have to do on pay, health care, service contracting and taxes,” said National President **Bobby L. Harnage** to over 500 AFGE members who attended the conference. “We know exactly who our enemies are and what we need to do to take them on. So when things get complicated and times get tough—and believe me, they will get tough, very tough, over the next two to four years—just remember this; AFGE's right, they're wrong, and we *will* beat them.”

(continued on page 8)



*AFGE members learned about AFGE's position on pay, FEHBP, the budget surplus, public investment vs. tax cut, government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions, prison privatization, and child care.*



**"EXCELLENT"**

Barbara McGonagle, Local 3428



**"OUTSTANDING"**

Mike Spinelli, Local 1627



**"INFORMATIVE"**

Loretta Lewis, Local 2209



**"AFGE DELIVERS AGAIN!"**

McArthur Cheeks, Local 12

**"JUST WAIT 'TIL NEXT YEAR"**

Beth Moten, AFGE Legislative Director

**AFGE 2001**  
LEGISLATIVE & GRASSROOTS  
MOBILIZATION CONFERENCE  
www.afge.org

# AFGE Legislative & Grassroots



AFGE members listen to grassroots instructions on the Hill.



AFGE members prepare for a meeting with their member of Congress.



Members take a break from the morning plenary.



©Equat Silver S  
No reproduction without  
permission.

# AFGE's Mobilization Conference

AFGE LEGISLATIVE & GRASSROOTS

01



Rep. Al Wynn (D-Md.) (center) meets with members and 14th District NVP Schlein (at Wynn's left).



(l) 8th District NVP Rogers talks with Rep. Sabo (D-Minn.).



Members listen closely to Rep. Al Wynn (D-Md.).



A-76 stories.



# Legislative Conference (continued from page 5)



Local 3028 President Kevin McGee



(l-r) Ryan Neale, Aide to Senator Snowe (R-Maine), met with Bill Thoms of Local 1164.

During the conference, Harnage and Congressmen **Steny Hoyer** (D-Md.) met with reporters to discuss Hoyer's FEHBP premium legislation (H.R. 1307).

"Thousands of federal employees do not participate in FEHBP because they cannot afford it," said Harnage. Between 200,000 and 250,000 federal employees go uninsured each year because of the high cost of health insurance. Hoyer's bill would make health insurance more affordable to federal workers. H.R. 1307 would change the premium split to 80/20—80 percent paid by the government and 20 percent by the employee, more in line with the private sector. The premium split is currently 72/28.

"We need to energize federal employees to talk

with their lawmakers," said Hoyer to a room filled with federal employees at the news conference. "It makes a difference to a member of Congress." Twenty-five year member **Bill Thoms** of SSA **Local 1164** echoed Hoyer's comments before meeting with an assistant to Senator **Olympia J. Snowe** (R-Maine). "It's really important for the union to be heard and to have some face time with elected officials."

DVA **Local 3028** President **Kevin McGee**, a member since 1988, came from Anchorage, Alaska, to discuss several issues with Alaska Senators **Ted Stevens** (R) and **Frank Murkowski** (R). "I'm going to talk with them about several components of the DVA Independent Budget and the debate to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

Not all AFGE members at the conference had ten or twenty years under their belts. A new generation of AFGE members is working in the federal government—federal employees who witness day-in and day-out the need for union representation and the importance of legislative involvement. **Mike Spinelli**, Treasurer of **Local 1627** in Pittsburgh, is part of AFGE's next generation. A member for three years, the 2001 conference was Spinelli's first but not his last.

"Everything is new. But I'm learning and look forward to coming back." AFGE looks forward to seeing hundreds of AFGE rookies and veterans in D.C. for next year's conference.



(l) Senator John Warner (R-Va.) talks with several AFGE Local leaders from Virginia during AFGE's Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference.

## sign up today



[www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

## List Project Underway—Help Us Help You

In the next 16 months, AFGE will undertake a major list update to correct old and outdated addresses. Many AFGE members may not realize it but their incorrect or outdated addresses may even be incorrect on voter registration cards—making them unregistered voters. Please take a few seconds to compare the information kept by your Local to your voter registration card. If the name and address do not match, updating and correcting are needed. It is vitally important to fix the

error with your AFGE Local and/or Board of Elections so AFGE may better reach you in the future.

If you wish to update your name and address, talk with your Local, or e-mail the corrected address information to AFGE at [membershipupdate@afge.org](mailto:membershipupdate@afge.org). If you have any questions, please feel free to call **Kristin Nabers** at (202) 639-6407.

# Health & Safety Watch

## Important Hepatitis C Information

By Milagro Rodriguez, AFGE Health & Safety Specialist

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which is found in the blood of persons who have this disease. HCV is spread by contact with the blood of an infected person. Acute hepatitis C symptoms include fatigue, nausea, joint pain, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, yellowish eyes or skin, and dark urine. Some people do not show any symptoms. Chronic hepatitis C does not have identifiable symptoms. The most common symptom is fatigue. About 50-80 percent of cases infected with the hepatitis C virus develop chronic hepatitis. Infected individuals can develop cirrhosis, liver disease and even cancer.

Workers who deal with high-risk populations are most at risk. That includes health care workers, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, such as paramedics and EMTs. In correctional facilities, the danger is made worse by the enclosed quarters and overcrowding. Occupational exposures include needlesticks, cuts from bloody sharp objects, and fluids getting through an open wound or cut. People who received a blood transfusion before 1992 (when a screening test became available) and those who share contaminated needles may also be at risk. Transmission via sexual contact is less frequent. An infected mother can pass it on to her baby.

If you are in a high-risk job, follow standard universal precautions. That means treating every exposure to blood or bodily fluids as though it is contaminated. Use gloves, masks and face shields. If you have an exposure, wash the affected areas immediately and get medical attention.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C and there are no drugs that prevent infection after exposure. Focus on prevention. Make sure your employer provides personal protective equipment and safer needle devices and be sure to use them. If you think you have been exposed, get tested.

For more information on hepatitis C, contact the Hepatitis Foundation International at (800) 891-0707; the American Liver Foundation on the Web at [www.liverfoundation.org](http://www.liverfoundation.org), or by phone at (800) 223-0179 (GOLIVER) or (888) 443-7222 (4HEPABC); or call the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse at (301) 654-3810.



*If you want to make a difference in the world, have an impact on national and international problems—and build a good life for yourself at the same time—consider a career in the public sector.*

*The federal government offers competitive salaries, outstanding benefits, advancement opportunities and job security. And the jobs are out there, whether you're a computer scientist, an anthropology major, or still exploring your future.*

*Find out more about a career in public service at [www.naspaa.org/publicservices/career](http://www.naspaa.org/publicservices/career). Check it out.*

NASPAA National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration

# News You Can Use

## Steps To a More Secure Future

Below are five easy steps that will help to ensure long-term personal financial independence. For more information, log onto the American Savings Education Council's Web site at [www.asec.org](http://www.asec.org).



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FOREST FIRES.  
[www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com)



## Contractors Protest TRAC Act

The Coalition for Outsourcing and Privatization (COP) is pursuing an aggressive campaign to defeat the TRAC Act, reported the Bureau of National Affairs Federal Contracts Report (FCR). FCR wrote that before the bill was reintroduced in February, COP wrote to members of Congress voicing the group's concerns, asserting that the bill would bring an immediate halt to all contracting for government services.

According to FCR, COP is very concerned about the overreaching aspects of the bill that could literally shut down the government. One contractor said the TRAC Act is terrible legislation and it is a 'shut down the government' bill. COP is also upset that the government is counting the number of contractor employees involved in government contracting.

It's time for contractors to understand that the government is accountable to its investors—the American taxpayers. Contrary to what contractors want Congress to believe, the TRAC Act *will* help to create a more efficient federal government.

## AFGE on Commercial Activities Panel

The Comptroller General of the United States, **David M. Walker**, published a notice in the *Federal Register* on April 17, 2001, announcing the formation of the Commercial Activities Panel to study federal service contracting.

Section 832 of the Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 directed the Comptroller General to convene a panel of experts to study this area and to submit the panel's report to Congress by May 1, 2002, with recommended changes in policies and legislation. The Commercial Activities Panel is to consider, among other subjects, the procedures for determining whether functions should continue to be performed by government personnel and for comparing the relative cost of performance by government employees and contractor personnel. The statute directs the Panel to consider the implementation of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act (FAIR Act) of 1998 and the conduct of public/private competitions pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76.

In announcing the members of the Panel, Walker noted that the Panel meets the statutory requirement for fair representation of federal labor organizations, persons in private industry, the Department of Defense and OMB. AFGE National President **Bobby Harnage** was selected to the 12-member Panel.

The Panel's initial organizational meeting will be held in Washington, D.C., on May 8, 2001. Walker stated that he anticipates the Panel will hold six or seven meetings in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere and noted that the Panel would conduct several public hearings in various locations to provide opportunities for interested parties to express their views on the issues the Panel will address.

Information about the Panel and its activities will be available on the home page of the General Accounting Office at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov) by clicking on Commercial Activities Panel.

## Federal Police Officers Steering Committee Update

The goals and mission of AFGE's Police Officers Steering Committee are to provide assistance to all police officers within AFGE. The Committee's sole purpose is to provide unity of action in all matters affecting the mutual interest of federal police officers nationally. AFGE's National Office agreed with Local membership that the Committee is needed to provide insight to the issues that affect police officers within AFGE.

Since the induction of the Committee, the group has

worked hard in fulfilling the commitment to work with those who bear the duty to provide the most professional service possible. The Committee has reached out to all AFGE police officers to create an environment by which respect, kindness and clear communications of issues are afforded everyone.

The Committee strives to provide an environment that promotes professional development, acknowledges police officers' contributions and supports collaborative efforts in the development of highly professional

police officers within AFGE. In the future, the Committee will attempt to broaden its efforts to provide support for national AFGE leadership in areas that directly affect police officers on a daily basis.

Are you a federal police officer and interested in becoming involved with the Federal Police Officers Steering Committee? For more information, go to [www.angelfire.com/mi3/afgefedpolice/](http://www.angelfire.com/mi3/afgefedpolice/) or contact **Joe Lopes**, AFGE Legislative Rep., at (202) 639-6430.

# On The Hill

## Pentagon Uses 734,000

(continued from page 1)

The jobs most commonly contracted out were research, development, test and evaluation work, professional administration and management support services, and maintenance and property repair.

The breakdown for outsourced service jobs is: 230,000 Army positions, 231,000 Navy positions, 199,000 Air Force positions and 71,000 Defense agency positions.

The new report is sure to fuel the ongoing debate about how much federal work should be contracted out. The largest federal employees' union, the American Federation of Government Employees, seized on the data as evidence that Defense has "sold off large chunks of our national security to service contractors."

"We have heard a lot of lies the last few years about how much smaller DoD's work force has become. DoD's work force has not gotten any smaller; it's merely been reconfigured," said AFGE president **Bobby Harnage**.

Harnage said a similar Defense review of service contractors three years ago found only 197,000 jobs contracted out. Defense officials, however, said those numbers cannot be compared because the criteria for counting outsourced work has changed.

(Article was reprinted with permission from *Government Executive*, [www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com).)

## Bush Signature Overturns Worker Safety Protection

President **George W. Bush** condemned millions of workers to the pain and suffering of ergonomic injuries when he signed legislation on March 20 overturning the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) ergonomics standard. Under the terms of the legislation, OSHA is prohibited from issuing a similar rule in the future unless Congress votes to allow a new measure.

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives voted to kill the new worker safety rule with little debate after business groups made overturning the standard a top priority.

Ergonomic hazards are the biggest job safety problem in America. Every year, more than 1.8 million U.S. workers suffer painful injuries on the job with some 600,000 being serious enough to require missed work. The injuries suffered by workers are due to heavy lifting, repetitive work and poorly designed jobs. The OSHA workplace safety rule would have required employers to train workers, find and fix job hazards, and provide medical evaluations to injured workers, where necessary.

# On The Record With...



## FEHBP-Time to Fix It Representative Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

*"Right now, 250,000 federal employees do not participate in FEHBP."*

Every American has a stake in ensuring that the federal government attracts able and energetic workers to its ranks. However, all too often we fail to provide the competitive pay and benefits that make this necessity a reality.

As part of my efforts to raise federal employee pay and benefits to a more competitive level, I recently introduced H.R. 1307, which would help federal employees and annuitants afford quality health-care.

In 1959, Congress created the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) as a recruitment and retention tool for the federal government to compete in the job market. For over 40 years, FEHBP has fulfilled its mission and presently insures over 9 million employees, their dependants and annuitants.

Unfortunately, FEHBP has not been immune to spiraling health-care premium increases. This year alone, premiums will increase 10.5 percent. An aging federal work force, longer-living retiree population and the increased use of prescription drugs are driving FEHBP premium increases.

For a federal employee making \$30,000, premiums are now consuming 10.8 percent of their take home pay--an increase of over 2 percent in just three years. FEHBP premium increases, coupled with a 32 percent pay gap between the public and private sectors, are impacting the federal government's efforts to recruit and retain the best and brightest to public service.

My legislation would increase the government's share of FEHBP premiums from 72 percent to 80 percent. This will not only decrease premiums but will also bring the federal government more in line with the private sector and state and local governments. For family coverage, the average private sector employee pays \$138 a month. Most state employees pay \$138, but a Federal employee pays \$211. The problem is so acute that right now 250,000 federal employees do not participate in FEHBP.

My hope is that this legislation will be able to repair some of the inequities that exist between federal employees and their private sector counterparts. It is an important step in the right direction toward recruiting and retaining quality workers to the ranks of the federal government.



## Blue Collar Government Employees Deserve Better Representative Ciro Rodriguez (D-Texas)

Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the 225,000 blue-collar employees who work for the federal government. These trade, craft, and labor employees are essential to our federal government's daily operation, yet we are not treating them with respect and dignity by paying them fairly under the Federal Wage System. Today I am introducing legislation, the Federal Wage Worker Pay Fairness Act of 2001, which addresses the fundamental problems with our federal wage system.

Blue-collar federal employees, a majority of whom work for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), are key to the security and defense of our nation. They perform a range of duties critical to the success of military missions and the safety of our soldiers. They maintain our tanks and fighter planes, they repair ships and they handle munitions. It is by their sweat and hard work that we show our commitment to and support of our armed forces.

Wage grade employees in the VA are the men and women who work to fulfill America's promise to our veterans. Many of these workers are veterans themselves. They are the food service employees who prepare and deliver the nourishment veterans need to heal and recover from illness. They are the housekeepers who do the dirty and often hazardous work of maintaining a safe and clean hospital. They are the carpenters, mechanics, and electricians who keep the VA hospitals operating 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week.

The pay for wage grade employees is supposed to be set according to local prevailing rates—rates that compare to the same types of jobs performed by their non-federal counterparts. But for too long,

federal employees have not been compensated at prevailing rates. They are not making a living wage. Many of the wage grade workers at the lower grades cannot afford the premiums on their federal health insurance plans. Some are even eligible for food stamps and hover just above the poverty level.

The Federal Wage System for these dedicated and hardworking employees is a failure. It is time to do the right thing for these workers. The American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, the largest federal employee union, has been vigilant in urging Congress to provide the needed redress to the injustices in the Federal Wage System. My legislation, the Federal Wage Worker Pay Fairness Act of 2001, does so and is supported by AFGE.

First, the bill would guarantee wage grade workers an annual pay raise. Second, the legislation would lift the caps on blue-collar pay increases. Third, my legislation would end the discriminatory practice of paying Department of Defense wage grade employees less than their counterparts in VA by restoring Monroney requirements to DoD. Fourth, the legislation would simplify the data collection and administration of the Federal Wage Schedule.

Mr. Speaker, the single most important measure of a pay-setting system—for either white or blue-collar workers—is whether it allows workers to earn sufficient income to support a family in a decent fashion. Does it produce at least a stable standard of living? Does it hold out the hope that in good economic times, improvements in the standard of living are possible? Our current system does not.

(Source: *Congressional Record*, March 28, 2001, E467 & E468)

## Local 916 Signs Up 85 New Members in 24 Hours

**L**ocal 916 in District 9 held an organizing drive on Feb. 14, 2001, at Tinker Air Force Base (AFB), Okla. Within 24 hours, the Local added 85 new members. Yes, that is correct—85 new members in one day.

there were some sleepy AFGE members running the drive, all agreed the loss of sleep was well worth the effort of adding 85 new members to the Local.

“It was a team effort,” said Pres. **Mark Dickinson**.

“1st VP **Danny Kaler**, 2nd VP **Fred McDuff** and all of the

stewards deserve the credit.” The organizing drive pushed

Local 916’s membership total over 2,200. The

Local plans to target other areas of the base in the future, spreading the word about the great benefits workers receive when they join AFGE.

The Local established a plan and targeted three specific buildings in one area of the base. The campaign officially began when stewards distributed flyers to workers announcing the upcoming drive. Next, the Local held Lunch & Learns during all three shifts over the course of 24 hours. Though



## AFGE NEWS

## Local 1286 Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



**M**embers of **Local 1286**, Federal Correctional Institution in Ashland, Ky., recently celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Local during a dinner honoring the Local’s senior members. Pictured in the photograph (l-r) are **Joe E. Pitchford** (former Pres.) **L. Cleo Scott** (current Secretary-Treasurer and former Pres.) and **Thomas C. Bullington** (charter member and former Pres.). Congratulations!

## Local 1336’s Clark Wins Award

**L**ocal 1336, in Kansas City, Mo., recently announced Executive VP **Charles E. Clark** as the recipient of the first *Star Reporter in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Award*. According to Local 1336’s newsletter, what put Clark over the top to win the award was his July/August 2000 article that spoke out against racism, ‘Diversity or Adversity?’

## AFGE Gains Support In Pay Parity Battle

**I**n the fight for equality of civilian and military pay, AFGE received critical support in a House Budget Committee vote on March 21, 2001. Rep. **Jim Moran** (D-Va.) offered an AFGE-supported amendment to the budget resolution to set the pay increases at the same level—keeping with a 17-year tradition of pay parity between the federal civilian work force and the military. Currently, military pay is scheduled to be raised by 4.6 percent and civilian pay by 3.6 percent for FY 2002.

“It is very disappointing to federal employees and their families that the President chose to disregard the tradition of pay parity and instead offer a pay increase of 3.6 percent,” said National President **Bobby L. Harnage**.

Rep. **Tom Davis** (R-Va.) joined AFGE in support of military-civilian pay parity for FY 2002. Davis, though not a member of the House Budget Committee, sent a letter to Republican members of the committee in support of pay parity prior to the vote.

“AFGE families thank Moran and Davis for their dedication, support and leadership on civilian-military pay parity in Congress,” said Harnage. “Moran and Davis clearly recognize that pay parity is an issue that affects everything from productivity to recruitment of civilian and military personnel in the federal work force.”

Thanks to Senator **Paul Sarbanes** (D-Md.) and other friends of federal employees, on April 6, 2001, the Senate included in its FY2002 Budget Resolution language which assumes an average 4.6 percent civilian and military pay raise for next year.

See *On The Hill* (pages 6-7) for more AFGE Legislative news.

## What Good Is A Union?

**WHAT IS A UNION?** A union is a group of persons united in a common cause.

**WHAT GOOD IS A UNION IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE?** A union in government service gives you the opportunity to present any problems to the person who can solve your problems by duly elected delegates.

**HOW STRONG IS A UNION?** A union is as strong as the group of which it is comprised.

**WHO BENEFITS FROM A UNION?** YOU and every person in government service.

**WHAT IS THE LARGEST UNION IN THE WORLD?** The United States of America.

(The Government Standard, January 12, 1951)



## NCFLL Council Elects New Slate of Officers

**T**he National Council of Field Labor Locals (NCFLL) elected a new slate of officers to four-year terms in March. The newly elected officers are President **Ron Yarman**, Executive VP **Jim Weyrauch**, Treasurer **Ken Maglicic** and Recording Sec. **Eric Ramirez**. Elected National Vice Presidents are **Roger Jackson**, **Hugh Smith**, **Frank Dancy**, **Richard Coon**, **Scott Wilkinson**, **Bill Henson** and **Jeff Darby**. Outgoing NCFLL President **Jesse Rios** received a mantle clock for his 22 years of service as the head of the Council.

The NCFLL, made up of 22 AFGE Locals, represents more than 10,000 regional and field personnel. They include office support staff, investigators and compliance officers, safety and health inspectors in both OSHA and MSHA, economists, auditors, employment and training personnel, and all other Department of Labor (DoL) professionals and specialists in DoL’s 14 agencies. For more information on the NCFLL, log onto [www.ncfll.org](http://www.ncfll.org).