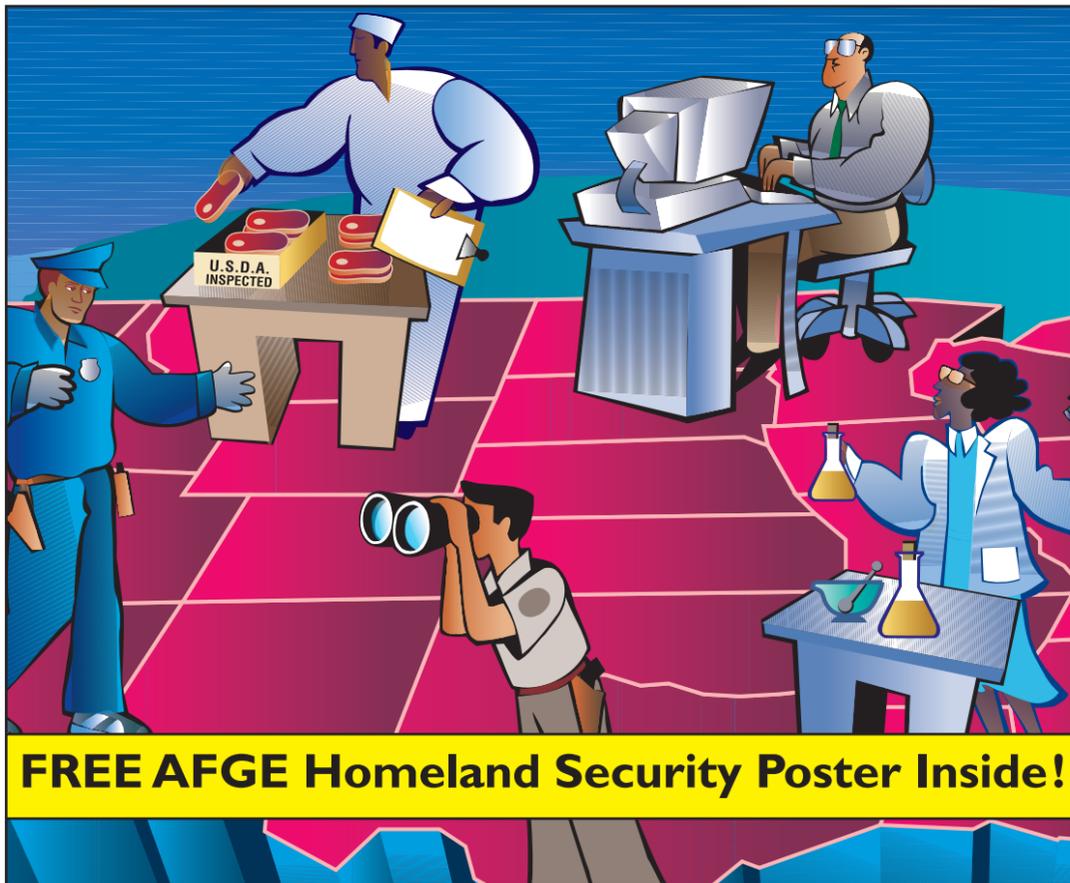




# The Government STANDARD

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO  
Vol. 18, No. 2 March/April 2002

for current and retired government workers and their families [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)



## AFGE Wins Saturday Premium Pay in the DVA

On Jan. 23, the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 was signed into law. The law guarantees Saturday premium pay for Title 5-Title 38 hybrids (LPN's, pharmacists, physical therapists, occupational therapists and respiratory therapists). The guarantee of Satur-

day premium pay for Title 5-Title 38 hybrids went into effect with respect to pay periods beginning on or after Jan. 23. This legislative victory for AFGE is our union's first installment in our efforts to secure Saturday premium pay for all DVA employees.

(see *AFGE Secures Saturday Pay in DVA* on page 10)



## The Griner Era (1962-1972)

The *Government Standard* has been counting down to AFGE's 70th anniversary on August 18, 2002, with "AFGE Time Capsule," a six-part series that began in the September/October 2001 issue. This issue covers **Part 4: The Griner Era (1962-1972)**.

(see *The Griner Era* on page 5)

## Jump Into Grassroots Action

*"I don't want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub."*

— **Grover Norquist**, May 25, 2001  
*Bush Administration Tax Strategist*

Because too many AFGE members are working in un-

certain times, members need to be better informed on the issues and must know how to take effective action. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through your Local's Legislative Committee and Communications Committee.

(see *Jump Into Grassroots Action* on page 11)

## The Revolving Door of Enron & the Federal Government

### The Largest Bankruptcy in U.S. History

Enron's fall from America's seventh largest corporation to bankruptcy provides a number of lessons for America to learn. Some of them are being acted on—such as Congressional action to limit the amount of employees' retirement savings that can be invested in

company stock. But others, such as the stock market bubble that produced Enron's rise and fall, have yet to be fully understood.

(see *Enron* on page 4)

## AFGE ADVOCATES FOR AMERICAN FREEDOMS & RIGHTS

*Democratic & Republican Lawmakers Object to President's Anti-Worker E.O.*

Republican and Democratic Representatives sent a letter to President **George Bush** in February objecting to Executive Order (E.O.) 13252 that denies union representation to more than 1,000 employees at the Department of Justice (DoJ) because of national security concerns. The letter stated:

"We are writing to express our strong disagreement with your decision to issue E.O. 13252 last month. We express this reservation at a time when we are united in our support of your efforts to combat global terrorism. The American people, foremost among them unionized fire fighters, police officers and other public workers, have rallied to your call to service. But among the freedoms America stands for are its freedom of association and the right to organize. To deny a group of American citizens—in this case citizens in service to our government and the pursuit of justice—such a fundamental human right is a serious action that should only be taken under the most extreme circumstances.

"To our knowledge, there has never been any suggestion over the past 20 years that their union membership imperiled national security. Even more surprising was the tim-

ing of your order. It was issued the same day the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) convened a hearing in Miami to act on a DoJ employee's petition to allow a vote for union representation. To an outside and objective observer, this timing appears to be more than coincidental.

"We respectfully request you reverse this decision and would like to know whether or not the Administration is considering broadening it to include other agencies. We all agree that protecting national security is critically important. However, using national security as a guise ultimately cheapens the very thing we are fighting to protect."

AFGE's Legislative Representatives will continue to work with lawmakers to reverse the decision and to ensure similar orders are not issued in other agencies. AFGE members thank Representatives **Steny H. Hoyer** (D-Md.), **John Conyers** (D-Mich.), **Danny Davis** (D-Ill.), **Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton** (D-D.C.), **Jim Moran** (D-Va.), **Connie Morella** (R-Md.), **Chris Smith** (R-N.J.) and **Al Wynn** (D-Md.) for supporting federal employees and their freedom of association and right to organize.

## Thirty-Five AFGE Local Presidents Attend Orientation, Training in Washington, D.C.



*Local Presidents meet with AFGE National Officers (see page 9).*

# A Message from President Bobby L. Harnage



In my 40 years as a federal employee and union representative, I have witnessed good times and bad times for government workers. Together, through our collective voice, we have worked successfully to advance the cause of federal and D.C. government employees.

But, I have never seen such attacks on unions and AFGE as I have witnessed in the last 14 months.

Last January, right after his inauguration, the President issued three anti-union Executive Orders—one directed at AFGE.

One disallowed “union” contracts for large government transportation projects.

Another mandated that a prior Executive Order—which required managers to give employee unions a greater role in improving the federal work place—was reversed, sending a signal to managers that it is okay to engage in anti-union behavior.

The third of the President’s anti-union Executive Orders required contractors to post

## Let’s Stand Up for Union Rights—Your Rights—Together

notices saying that people in the private sector didn’t have to join unions. (This Executive Order has since been overturned by the courts.)

Interestingly, at the same time the Bush Administration was requiring contractors to post anti-union messages, the Administration was eliminating a regulation that required contractors to obey labor, environmental, and other laws or risk losing their eligibility for government contracts.

Health and safety have always been important union issues. Last year, the Administration canceled health and safety grants that had already been awarded to unions and universities for work on special projects designed to make work places safer.

Another big issue was the regulation that would have required proper ergonomics on the job to prevent computer injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. The Administration canceled that safety improvement at the request of Big Business.

Recently, the President issued an Executive Order that took away the right to collective bargaining for AFGE members in the U.S. Attorney’s Office, some of whom have been union members for more than 20 years. It was an absolute insult for the President to suggest that being a union member or having union rights equates to being a disloyal American who can’t be trusted.

The office in the Federal Labor Relations Authority where unions can file actions against management for labor law violations has been vacant for over a year, giving managers the freedom to violate the law at will.

In a variety of agencies, managers who have been anti-union (but couldn’t show it before) are now engaging in anti-union behavior by attacking union representatives, taking equipment from the union, canceling union contracts—all in *defiance of the law*.

Only last week I heard the President speak out against Senator McCain’s campaign finance reform legislation which would no longer permit the Enrons of the world to buy our government. Not only did he speak out against the legislation, he suggested adding an amendment that would essentially take away the right of AFGE or any other union to lobby Congress for better pay or whatever the issue, and would prevent us from communicating with you on issues being taken up by Congress. Of all the actions so far, this is the most anti-union of them all.

Today, the challenge we face is different than that of any other time. Our ability to come together under the laws of our democracy and to pursue our legitimate interests for fair compensation, good working conditions, and effective government (to do our jobs well) is being challenged.

These attacks are likely to only increase over time—not decrease.

We must stand more united than ever. The elections this fall for Congress will be critical. Can we elect a Congress that will support the right of Americans to belong to a union in a free society? Or will we elect a Congress that continues to become more and more anti-union—acting more and more like lapdogs for Enron and others—as big companies and corporate executives (who hate unions) donate large amounts of money

to elect politicians more beholden to their interests than to those of working families?

What can we do about it? Every AFGE member needs to contribute to the AFGE-PAC. These are your voluntary dollars that can be given to candidates for Congress under Senator McCain’s legislation, which will give all of us a fighting chance to elect a Congress that will protect our rights as Americans to join unions—freely and without intimidation—as well as require managers to bargain as prescribed by law, and to protect AFGE’s right to lobby on your behalf and communicate with you.

The time has come for all of us as members to stand up and stand together as union brothers and sisters with the same agenda. We must exercise our responsibilities as citizens, holding our leaders accountable through the political process to do what’s right for working families.

We have been successful legislatively in the past because of our skill. For AFGE to be successful in the future, skill alone will not work. Success in the future will require each employee to step forward and do their share rather than sit on the sidelines watching others do it for them. Everyone must call their Senators, contribute to AFGE-PAC, and help out in a Congressional or Senatorial campaign. If you think I am crying wolf, go to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) and read my column in the May/June 2001 issue of *The Government Standard*. This administration has proven our worst suspicions.

## Glover Elected NVP

**Jim Glover of Local 375** was elected as the National Vice President (NVP) for the **7th District** on Saturday, January 6, 2002. The special election was held after the death of **Bob Nelson**.

## Union Views

*Editors’ Note: The following letter was written by Local 1629 member Jeff Goyner and sent to AFGE’s National Office on Jan. 2, 2002. Goyner is one of thousands of Wage Grade employees in the federal government who AFGE believes deserve a significant wage increase—which is what AFGE fights for on Capitol Hill every day. Portions of the letter were reprinted with Goyner’s permission to relay to AFGE members that their efforts are also needed to convince*

*members of Congress and the Bush Administration to make the necessary Wage Grade increases. Goyner’s letter is an example of how Congress and the President ultimately effect our jobs and our families—they write the bills that determine the salaries and wages federal employees receive or don’t receive. Turn to page 11 for facts and stats on Wage Grade Pay.*

**We need your help to stop this unfair practice!**

**See page 11 for instructions on what you can do to help.**

Today I received my wage grade pay schedule for 2002 and I am very disgusted. I am a WG-2 Janitor and I have received a 14 cent an hour pay raise—this is less than one percent. However, the GS people received a 4.5 percent raise. My Local is 1629 in Battle Creek, Mich., and they tell me the change has to come at the national level. Last year is the only year in the last five I have received a respectable raise—it was 36 cents an hour. I bring home less money than I did in 1997 because my pay has not increased enough to cover my increase in deductions.

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# Organizing News

## DCAA Flocks to AFGE

The 600-plus employees of the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) Western Region voted for AFGE representation at the end of 2001. The Western Region is headquartered in Los Angeles but employees are stationed in approximately 20 field and smaller offices across the west.

The DCAA Mid-Atlantic Region, with headquarters in Philadelphia, is going for AFGE representation as well. A mail ballot went out to 690 employees and will be counted in March. AFGE **Local 3529** is behind all the activity, sending out mailings to draw interest, filing representation petitions with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), and helping the new groups get started as independent Locals.

Next is the Eastern Region, with headquarters in Atlanta. Since AFGE **Local 3883** already represents DCAA in the Northeast, DCAA employees will have wall-to-wall representation, opening the door to bargaining on issues which the agency has been claiming are “national” rather than “regional.” Local 3529 President **Ray Downey** says his members want him to devote some of the Local’s funds to organizing new units “because DoD workers need union protection across the board.”

## DoD Local 1296 in Miss. Doubles Membership

In October, just three months after **Local 1296** elected new officers, membership doubled after the new board held its first membership drive. Local 1296 is headed by President **Joe Gibson**, 1st VP **Mary Ferguson**, 2nd VP **Tony Lusk**, Chief Steward **Ricky Songer** and Sec./Tres. **Benjamin Norris**. Congratulations!

## AFGE Organizing Institutes

AFGE will be holding six Organizing Institutes in Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and Portland, during 2002. Each Institute features equal portions of classroom and field training and covers various organizing techniques during a five-day, five-night period. Because of the rigorous schedule, participants must be prepared for physically challenging, energetic, on-your-feet activities. Visit the AFGE Web site at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) or contact your District National Vice President or the Membership & Organization Department [(202) 639-6410] for more information.

## AFGE Opens ‘Union Shop’ in Arizona

*Local 1662 and All Star Services Sign Agreement*



**Local 1662** successfully renegotiated a collective bargaining agreement with All Star Services, a contractor at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., in December. Local President **Josie Suarez**, Chief Steward **Mark Obergh** and **Dist. 12** Natl. Rep. **Jean Southam** negotiated increases in wages, fringe benefits and a union shop. (A union shop is an agreement that all workers must join the union, or pay a ‘service fee,’ within a specified time after being hired as a condition of employment.) Employees received the new contract during a luncheon party paid for by All Star Services and AFGE. The new contract increased Local 1662 by 80 members.

## AFGE Is Growing

*Boston, Lincoln and Topeka  
DVA Workers Choose AFGE*

Some 500 Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) employees working for the Boston Healthcare Systems chose AFGE as their exclusive bargaining agent in an election held Jan. 16. The new unit includes psychologists, social workers, physical and recreational therapists, pharmacists and other non-nurse professional employees at the Jamaica Plains, Brockton, and West Roxbury Medical Centers, as well as a number of clinics in the greater-Boston area. AFGE **Local 221**, which represents some 100 registered nurses at Jamaica Plains, will represent the new employees.

In Lincoln, Neb., DVA professionals voted for AFGE representation in Jan. The employees will be represented by **Local 2219**. **Barbara Jordan** is the Local President. In Topeka, Kan., a bargaining unit of 270 professionals (doctors included) voted for AFGE in December. AFGE represents some 135,000 DVA employees nationwide.

## AFGE Wins Vote at Three Michigan SSA Offices

Workers in the Social Security Administration (SSA) field offices in Bay City, West Branch and Alpena, Mich., now have AFGE representation and the protection of AFGE’s Master Labor Agreement with SSA. The employees voted in on-site elections on Feb. 6 and 7.

Stewards and rank-and-file members of **Local 3272** from the nearby Saginaw field office did most of the organizing work, making visits to each office in the weeks prior to the vote. Assisted by **Deborah Fredericksen** who was representing **Council 220**—the AFGE SSA Field Office Council—Local 3272 members were able to meet face-to-face with almost every employee.

**Ken Keillor**, President of Local 3272, said that a number of employees had been AFGE members at other SSA sites and wanted to bring AFGE into their new offices. Several have already joined or volunteered to be stewards. “With this victory, every SSA field office in AFGE’s **7th District** is now represented by AFGE,” added Keillor.

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

# COMMON SENSE ECONOMICS

## The Revolving Door of Enron & the Federal Government

*Editors' Note: The author of the following article, **Mark Wesibert**, is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington, D.C., [www.cepr.net](http://www.cepr.net).*

The demise of Enron leaves us with another huge, ostentatious symbol of the once vaunted "New Economy" going belly up, and the inevitable question: what lessons will be learned? This monster trader of everything from energy futures to advertising space, and producers of very little, went from number seven on the Fortune 500 list of America's largest corporations to a bankrupt failure in a matter of months.

A fall from grace of this magnitude and speed inevitably causes rethinking, with teary-eyed employees who lost their savings testifying at Congressional hearings, and shareholders' lawsuits piling up. There are a number of easy lessons that are likely to result in legal reforms. First, some limits on how much of employees' pension funds can be put in company stock. It was an ugly spectacle: Enron's top executives, some undoubtedly knowing what the company concealed from investors, selling hundreds of millions of dollars worth of company stock while employees lost \$1.2 bil-

lion, more than half of their retirement savings. This is more than even our normally corporate-compliant Congress can ignore.

Some reforms on financial disclosure, whether they take the form of legal changes at the Securities and Exchange Commission, auditing rules, or enforcement, are also likely. Enron had 3,500 affiliates and partners throughout the world, and used at least some of these to hide massive amounts of debt and to inflate its profits. There were conflicts of interest all over the place, including those finessed by the accounting giant Arthur Andersen, which performed both internal and outside audits for Enron. But regardless of who ends up with most of the blame, it shouldn't have been so easy to get away with misstating the company's earnings and hiding so much vital information from investors. Something is likely to be done to make at least some of these deceptions more difficult in the future.

Larger lessons seem more distant, or barely recognized. Enron's co-conspirators grew rich by creating markets where they were not needed, and through deregulation of public utility systems that didn't need to be deregulated.

California's energy crisis should have made it clear to anyone who wasn't directly profiting from the chaos (as Enron did) that the old system worked a lot better. For electricity at least, a regulated monopoly is far superior to a "competitive" system in which suppliers are able to gouge consumers and the market doesn't even ensure that there will be adequate capacity to keep the lights on at night.

There are a number of clear economic and technological reasons for that result. But the combination of ideological and pecuniary interests in deregulation was so powerful that the whole debate was badly distorted. Even at the peak of California's troubles, much of the press continued to blame "partial deregulation" for the disaster—as if allowing consumer payments for electricity to rise without the limit would have solved the problem created by deregulation.

That brings us to another problem that Enron exemplified: the selling of our government to the highest bidders. Enron was as much a part of the Bush Administration as it is possible for a corporation to be—CEO **Kenneth Lay** is a longtime friend of the Bush family (raising funds for both

father and sons) and Enron employees contributed \$1.3 million to **George W. Bush's** presidential campaign.

Enron's investment in government was a profitable one, buying crucial support for its deregulatory agenda across the country. Its political influence was also instrumental in choosing members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which oversees Enron's business, and making Enron a co-author of the Bush Administration's energy plan. It remains to be seen whether this clout will rescue Enron's officers from any federal investigations and prosecution.

Perhaps the most immediate lesson that has yet to be gleaned from

the largest bankruptcy in history concerns the stock bubble that drove the 1990's expansion. Stock prices that are out of line with any plausible story about future profit growth cannot hold. This is still true for the stock market taken as a whole, where the average price is currently 25 times the level of even pre-recession earnings. Compare this to the market's historic average of about 14 to 1, and it is clear that current stock prices cannot be sustained, no matter how fast and furiously our economy recovers.

The reality has yet to sink in. A big bubble named Enron has burst, but much of the "bubble mentality" that drove investors into its fold still remains.

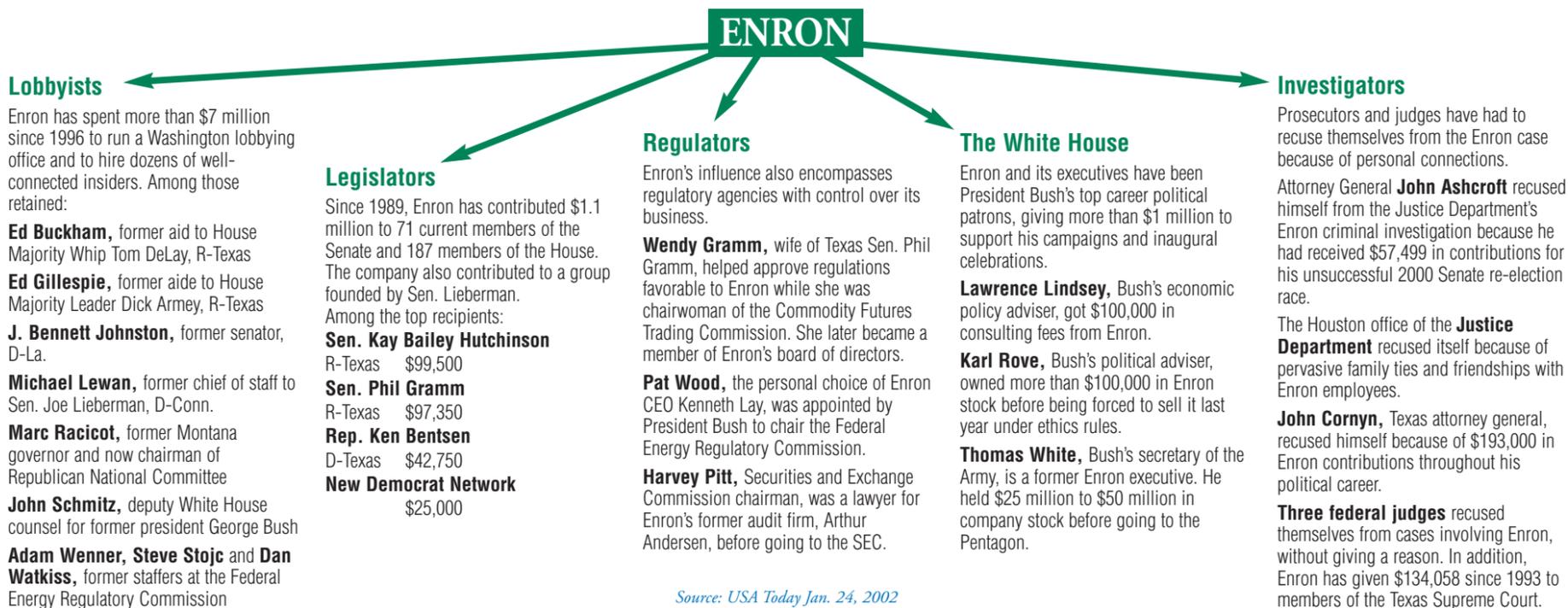
### Fuzzy Math Used in Budget Projections

The White House appears to have discovered a way to eliminate the deficit in its upcoming budget: get rid of the minus signs, reported *The Washington Post*. One day before the White House was to release its budget, it was discovered that a number of the tables failed to include minus signs to indicate the budget deficits.

In other words, the projected \$106 billion deficit in 2002 is reflected in the budget as a surplus, as are the deficits projected for 2003 and 2004. The Office of Management and Budget confirmed the problem and said the tables were fine when they went to the printer but somehow the minus signs disappeared because of a software conversion glitch.

## How Enron got its way in Washington

For the last ten years, Enron's influence in Washington has been pervasive. The company succeeded in escaping government regulation and forced local utilities to open their lines to power shipped from other states. Here's how:





# AFGE TIME CAPSULE

## The Griner Era *(continued from page 1)*

The following article was written by National President **Clyde M. Webber**, **John F. Griner's** successor, as it appeared in the December 1972 issue of *The Government Standard*. Here are excerpts from Webber's inaugural column as National President.

"You should all, by now, know how much higher salaries and wages are for both GS and Wage Grade employees than they were when John F. Griner took our Union's affairs in hand. You should be equally aware of our much stronger influence on Capitol Hill when we must state the case to Congress for justifiable legislation. Can we not use effectively this tool John F. Griner welded together and left for us?"

"I remember, if no one else does, that in that hectic, exciting time when we were organizing, organizing, organizing, day-by-day and week-by-week wherever Federal employees could be found, we in AFGE became

known throughout organized labor as "The Fastest Growing Union" and as "The Union on the Move." Have we slouched back on our couches? Are we less willing to roll up our sleeves? I think not.

"We have lost an able leader to a serious illness, but we have not lost the inspiration we can derive from the bold example he set for us. He may not be with us in person each and every day, but the remembrance of this man should sustain us for some time to come. I know it braces me, and I am sure that there are countless others in our ranks who are just as eager to carry on the fight that John F. Griner began."

Be sure to look for **Part 5: 1972-1982** of "AFGE Time Capsule" in the May/June 2002 issue of *The Government Standard*. This six-part series covering AFGE's colorful history, "AFGE Time Capsule," is counting down to AFGE's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on August 18, 2002.



*The Government Standard, August 21, 1964*

"THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT"—President Johnson gives one of the pens he used to sign the federal employee pay raise bill to AFGE National President John F. Griner. The President signed the bill in a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden attended by members of Congress and union and government officials.



A priceless message. Thanks to **Lynn Edwards** in AFGE's National Office for sharing this photo of her great-grandmother at what is thought to be Eastern Market in Washington, D.C. The photo was taken sometime between 1910 and 1915 by her great-grandfather, who was employed by the United States Department of Agriculture.

## AFGE Between 1962 & 1972

AFGE began to grow significantly in 1962 after President **John F. Kennedy** issued Executive Order 10988, allowing Exclusive Recognition and the right to bargain. It was also in 1962 when AFGE National President **James A. Campbell** was succeeded by **John F. Griner** (1907-1974), who would become the first AFGE leader to sit on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO. As reported in the December 1972 issue of *The Government Standard*, "one of Griner's first commands to AFGE's elected officers and staff was terse but tough—get out and organize."

And, organize they did. AFGE grew from 108,000 in 1962 to 280,000 in 1972. A full-time organizing team—augmented by staff from the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department—was created and each year brought enormous membership gains, as much as 30,000 members in one year. As AFGE grew in numbers, so did its lobbying clout. Aided by the formation of the Government Employees Council, a coalition of AFL-CIO affiliated unions with

members in the federal work force, the Federal Pay Comparability Act was enacted.

Under Griner, AFGE also accomplished Congressional enactment and Presidential signing of Wage Grade legislation, which ended an eight year struggle to award some 700,000 Wage Grade workers literally millions of dollars in denied pay, equity and justice. Also under Griner's leadership, AFGE established ownership of a National Office building in Washington, D.C., culminating a long-cherished dream dating back to the first AFGE leaders in 1932.

"When he [Griner] took office in 1962, AFGE was little more than a fraternal association beseeching a powerful and arrogant employer for crumbs of justice and equity," reported *The Government Standard* in December of 1972. "When he stepped aside, it was a power to be reckoned with at the White House, on Capitol Hill and in the offices of agency top-level management. He had transformed completely the image of AFGE

and given added stature to the title 'Civil Servant'."



Do you have any AFGE history you would like to add? Send the information or photo to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: "AFGE Time Capsule," 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. All photos and stories become property of the AFGE Communications Dept.

# OUR BEST HOME FEDERAL E



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- serve as a vital link to our loved ones receiving Social Security
- maintain safety at our nation's borders
- develop the latest medical preventions and cures
- safety-check the places we work

**We're there when you need us.**



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# ELAND SECURITY EMPLOYEES



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GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

## Cramming for the Midterm

'Midterm' is a phrase that takes us all the way back to our school days. Teachers told us the tests were worthwhile because they gauged how we were doing and what still needed to be done. The same holds true in politics. November's midterm elections are a test of AFGE's political abilities and a chance to grade elected officials, as well as the **Bush** Administration.

Of course, what makes this midterm different than recent years is the war on terrorism. AFGE members are first and foremost loyal Americans dedicated to their country and its leaders. While this is a time for all of us to pull together, elections by their very nature compel us to make choices. Obviously, it is important to show a unified front to the world, but in this, the greatest democracy, it

is also imperative that we freely and openly conduct elections.

This year it's a more delicate balancing act than ever before. How do we act in the best interests of the country and not just in the interest of AFGE? How do we push for non-partisan outcomes in Congress but engage in an election process that, by design, is based on partisan debate? It is a testimony to our nation's purpose that we have managed to hold democratic elections in the midst of national crisis. Americans went to the polls during throughout the Great Depression, over the course of two World Wars, the Korean War, Vietnam, and countless other times of national hardships. Elections are not about party politics—they're about the American way of life. They are what distin-

guish us from our enemies. In America, we settle our differences with ballots, not bullets.

At this moment, we face a divided government; a President riding high in the polls despite the closest electoral victory ever; a Senate under Democratic control because one Republican switched his affiliation to Independent; and a Republican House ruled by a handful of votes, with two or three members regularly deciding committee and floor votes.

In this closely divided environment, many of our members and the work they do are under attack. The Administration has announced a plan to privatize one-third of our jobs over the course of the next four years. Some of our Justice Department Locals have lost their bargaining rights. Over

half of AFGE corrections officers have their jobs on the FAIR Act list for the first time, which means the critical security we need to maintain convicted felons and terrorists could be contracted out. Management at the agency that operates Medicare is carrying out a concerted attack on the employee union, including removing equipment from their offices. The largest new group of new civilian government employees in years—the airport security employees—were established without Title V rights to representation. These are just some of the most blatant examples, on top of every agency facing privatization and contracting out on a daily basis. Under such attacks, we must be prepared to get involved in this year's election. These midterms are a test for the

very survival of this union and federal employment as we know it.

So what can you do? First, you can get registered and make sure your Local has your correct voting address so we can keep you informed on issues and candidates. You can get involved in grassroots lobbying and Labor 2002 activities through AFGE and your local AFL-CIO Labor Council. You can get educated on the candidates' records and then get yourself to the polls on Election Day.

Vote for the candidate who will safeguard your rights to a secure job with fair wages, benefits and pension—regardless of party affiliation. If you do that on Tuesday, November 5, 2002, we should have every confidence that our union will pass this midterm test.

### Be a Part of AFGE's March Blitz

*Call your AFGE District or Local for Details*

Congress sets the laws governing wages, benefits and contracting out. Congress approves the budgets for federal agencies. Congress oversees and can act on unilateral actions by agency directors and even the President.

AFGE must have Congressional Representatives and Senators who value the work that AFGE members do for America. It will continue to be nearly impossible to pass legislation that addresses our concerns—or defeat legislation that doesn't—until AFGE gets more members of Congress to speak on our be-

half. AFGE needs more Senators and Representatives who are pro-federal employee and not anti-worker. AFGE needs more Representatives and Senators who care about the needs of our families instead of big profits for unaccountable corporations.

Federal employees are America's best homeland security and it's high time Congress recognizes that. Be a part of the AFGE-PAC Blitz between March 18-31. Call your District or Local Office for more information.

### DoD Local 2096 Wins A-76 in Virginia

*"I would suggest that the first thing that everyone does is to get educated."*

*— Dwight Brinson, AFGE Local 2096*

*Editors' Note: The following article was written and submitted by Dwight Brinson of AFGE Local 2096.*

**Local 2096** at the Naval Surface Weapons Center in Dahlgren, Va., is satisfied with the outcome of the recent Public Works A-76 that lasted almost three years. We feel that we learned a lot about the study, management and ourselves. It was a long and hard battle from day one and it did not end until the contracting officer made the announcement. The final day for appeals was September 11, 2001.

We found that it is possible to win a study but it takes a lot of dedication by the Local and some help from management. There will be a lot of long days and nights and tons of paperwork that never seem to get finished.

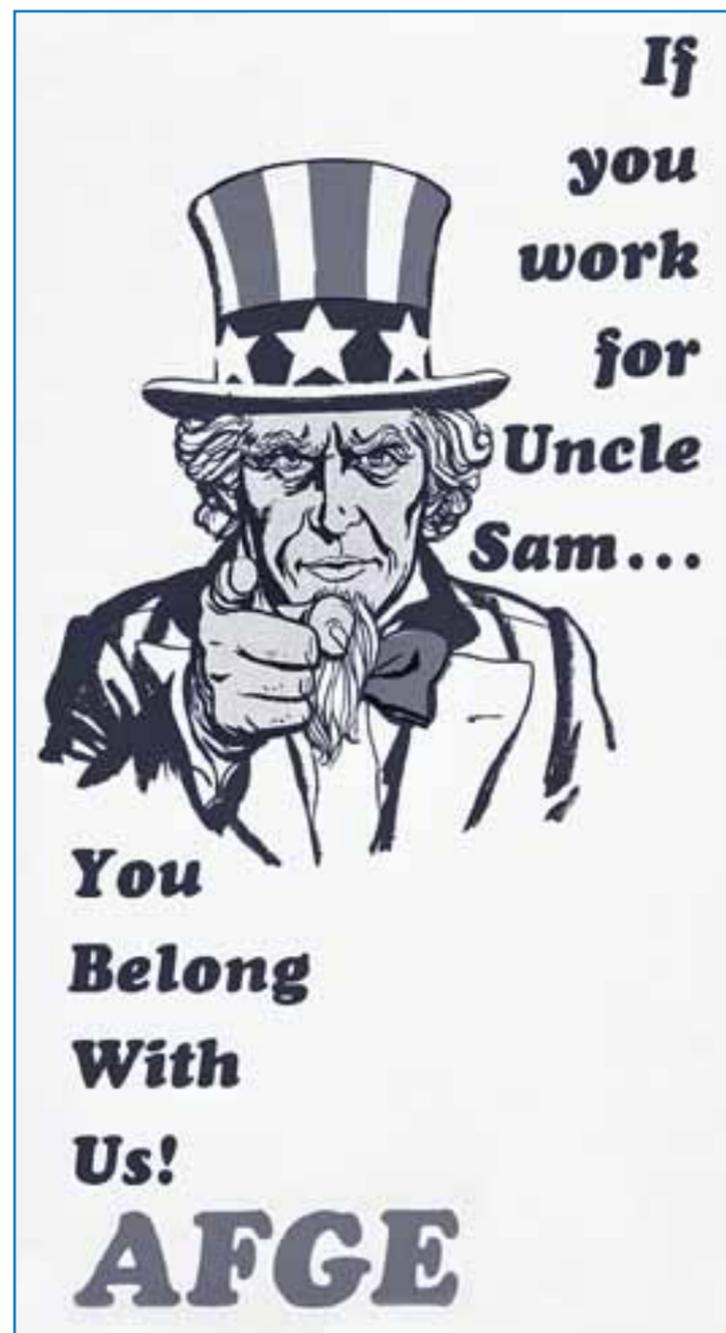
I would suggest that the first thing that everyone does is to get educated. The first thing that you need to read is the A-76 supplement published by the Office of Management and Budget. You also need to get copies of **Wiley Pearson's** (AFGE's Defense Policy Analyst in the National Office) activist handbook to go along with the A-76 manual. The handbook is great reading and the best place to start to gain knowledge as to how the A-76 process works. Make sure that everyone involved in the study gets the knowledge that they will need to see them through to the end of the study. This is a long, hard process

and is not meant for the weak at heart. The people that you choose in the beginning might not be around for the end of the study and that is the reason that everyone should have equal knowledge of the process.

After you have memorized these two documents, you are ready to get down to work and start making appeals to management to stop the study. This will not happen, but every time you meet with management you can always ask.

The United States Code is another source of reading information that you need to become acquainted with. There are laws that govern the A-76 process that management seems to have problems following. Your job is to see that they stay on the right road and that they don't go off it. If you get really acquainted with the A-76 process, you will find that there are very few people that really know the rules, let alone follow them. I am not saying this to be funny because this is not funny—especially when it is your job on the line.

To put all the things down that you need to do to win a study would take all of *The Government Standard's* pages. We just wanted to say that there is hope as long as you are willing to put in the work. If anyone would like information or help with what they think is the correct way to win a study, we would be glad to help. Contact us by calling the Local at (540) 653-4011 or by e-mailing [afge2096@nswc.navy.mil](mailto:afge2096@nswc.navy.mil).



*Vintage AFGE Call to Action poster, circa 1975.*

## AFGE Local Presidents Attend Orientation, Training



*Local Presidents meet with AFGE National Officers.*

For six days in December, over 35 AFGE Local Presidents came to the **George Meany** Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., and the AFGE National Office in Washington, D.C., for orientation and training to better understand AFGE and to better serve their members. Attendees included:

**Ralph Anderson** (DVA Local 1384, Ind.), **Darrell W. Banks** (Air Force

Local 1867, Colo.), **Barbara Brandt** (DoL Local 2391, Calif.), **Lorraine Chrastil** (DVA Local 2200, Neb.), **Michael E. Clarke** (DoD Local 1502, Wis.), **Ronald Coe** (DoD Local 1411, Ind.), **Mark Dickinson** (DoD Local 916, Okla.), **Larry W. Dowdy** (Marine Corps Local 2317, Ga.), **Eddie Eitches** (HUD Local 476, Va.), **Mollie Goodin** (SSA Local 4056, Fla.), **Donald Hale**

(Army Local 2367, N.Y.), **Brock Henderson** (Air Force Local 1547, Ariz.), **Jimmie B. Ledford** (DoD Local 2609, Mont.), **Aaron M. Lee** (USDA Local 2325, S.C.), **Phyllis Lipkinssilar** (DoL Local 914, Ohio), **William Logue** (DoD Local 908, Mo.), **Bill Luttrell** (DVA Local 2110, Calif.), **Betty L. Meness** (Navy Local 2326, Ill.), **Jeff Moulton** (USDA Local 1106, Calif.), **Thomas O.**

**Murphy** (Commerce Local 3810, D.C.), **Thomas Neal** (DVA Local 1228, Iowa), **Donna Nicholson** (Census Local 1438, Ind.), **Rita Nordhoff** (SSA Local 3610, W.V.), **Andrea Owens** (DoD Local 4055, D.C.), **George Parks** (DoD Local 1148, Ohio), **Trudy Pendergast** (Air Force Local 1869, S.C.), **Donald Roberts** (DoD Local 2134, Ill.),

**Tammy Romero** (DoD Local 2586, Okla.), **Gary Steele** (Air Force Local 2316, Pa.), **Lorraine Tuliano** (Navy Local 2113, Fla.), **Marty Vishinsky** (DVA Local 1745, Texas), **Thomas Webb** (SSA Local 3615, Va.), **Dempster Wheeler** (DoL Local 2519, Fla.), and **Joyce Woods** (INS Local 2718, Ill.).

## AFGE Education Council 252 News

**Council 252's** President **Ben Miller** announced in December that the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) issued its binding decision for the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and for AFGE Kansas City, Mo.

The issue at impasse was the parties' disagreement over the priorities to apply in selecting private offices and cubicles in the OCR Kansas City Regional Office. The FSIP sustained, with minor modifications, AFGE's position that private offices and cubicles in the OCR Kansas City Regional

Office should be based on seniority, regardless of whether the employees occupy an Attorney or an Equal Opportunity Specialist (EOS) position. The FSIP in its ruling stated that the employer (OCR)

provided no evidence establishing its position that assigning offices to both EOSs and attorneys will affect attorney recruitment and retention.

"Having carefully considered the evidence and arguments presented by the parties, we (FSIP) are persuaded that they should adopt a modified version of the Union's proposal to resolve their dispute over the priorities for selecting private offices and cubicles." The FSIP went on to say that, "... Regardless of whether employees occupy an attorney or an EOS position, they should compete for vacant offices and cubicles based on seniority within their particular grades."

Council 252 National Chief Steward **Jerry Fryer**—who organized AFGE's defense—said that the selection procedures AFGE proposed will remedy past procedures

that made it difficult, if not impossible, for EOSs to receive offices, although their need for them was similar to that of attorneys, especially in the team environment. Council 252 National Executive VP **Jerry Doyle** stated that the FSIP's ruling leaves no room for ambiguity and presents a positive decision of clarity that is fair, equitable and will have a beneficial effect on employee morale.

Miller says that now we must shift our focus to working with Kansas City Regional OCR management so that they understand the benefits of this ruling and, second, to continue running an efficient operation reflective of the high performance organization that we have with the caliber of personnel in the Kansas City OCR Regional Office.

## AFGE Adds Several Thousand More Claimants to INS-FLSA Case

AFGE, which represents some 24,000 Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) employees nationwide, has identified over 3,500 INS employees as potential claimants due overtime back pay in a Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) case being pursued by the union.

In an effort to ensure that all possible claimants are identified, AFGE utilized its Web site—[www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)—and solicited the names of current and former INS employees who were denied overtime during the period of June 2, 1991 through May 1, 1998. The employees were denied overtime as a result of the agency's misapplication of the FLSA. Some 3,573 visitors to AFGE's Web site filled out forms online, indicating their name was not included in the agency's database

of 8,674 names identified as possible claimants.

AFGE's grievance resulted in the agency changing its FLSA exempt status for thousands of INS employees, thus entitling the employees to FLSA overtime for the first time in INS history. Now AFGE is working to determine how much back pay each effected employee will receive

AFGE also provided forms on its Web site for claimants to use in reporting uncompensated overtime worked during the 1991 through 1998 period. The 'suffer or permit' automated claims forms and instructions were available on AFGE's Web site through Feb. 4. The agency waived the requirement that 'suffer or permit' forms be signed by the claimants, allowing AFGE to collect digitalized data to expedite the process.

# On The Hill

## Did You Know?

### Paycheck Protection Would Silence AFGE On the Hill

Federal employees who join AFGE govern themselves as a democracy. During conventions AFGE members vote on their dues, elect leaders and vote on how best to spend AFGE's money. AFGE contends that paycheck protection legislation, a.k.a. paycheck deception, is wasteful and burdensome to AFGE members and would not allow the union to function as a democracy. Most importantly—and this is the real intention of the legislation—it would also cease AFGE's ability to lobby and fight for worker freedoms and rights on Capitol Hill.

There are bills in statehouses across the country that would require written approval from every single member of a union before spending dues. Maintaining these records would apply ONLY TO UNIONS and not to other political associations or corporations. Paycheck protection is intended to hurt unions—it's that simple.

## Budget Benefits Contractors

### IT Part of New Bush Strategy

President Bush's budget proposal would more than double the growth of federal information technology (IT) spending, reported *The Washington Post*. Government IT spending is slated to reach \$52 billion in fiscal 2003 under the budget, up from \$48 billion this year. According to the Office of Management and Budget, the technology spending proposals also signify a new strategy by the Bush Administration. The Information Technology Association of America praises the increase while AFGE does not. Such increases add more contractors to the federal work force and displace more highly trained and experienced federal workers.



## Federal Firefighter Seminar Held

Over 100 fire and emergency services personnel, human relations officers, labor-relation specialists, attorneys and others with a vital interest in the employment aspects of the federal fire service, attended the 2002 Federal Firefighters Seminar at the Maritime Institute in Baltimore from Feb. 11-14. Sponsored by AFGE and the International Association of Fire Chiefs, attendees talked about a variety of issues and challenges facing the just under 10,000 civilian employees in the federal fire service.

The comprehensive four-day conference covered: firefighter compensation; qualifications for employment; physical fitness programs; workers' compensation and retirement; conditions of employment (labor-management relations); staffing, inspections, risk assessments, waivers and liability; privatization, most efficient organizations and developing in-house costs; and litigation and legislative issues. For more information on the conference and about AFGE's firefighters, log onto [www.afgefirefighters.org](http://www.afgefirefighters.org).

## AFGE Secures Saturday Premium Pay

(continued from page 1)

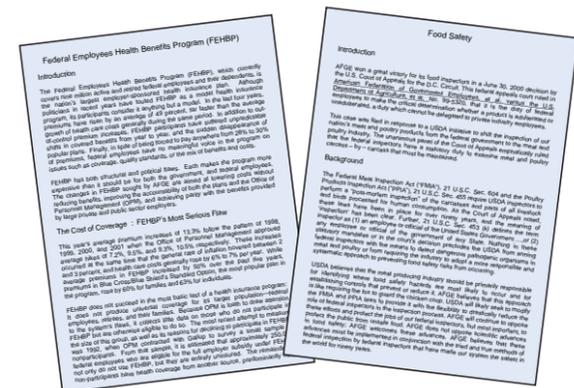
The new law requires the DVA to establish nationwide safe staffing levels. It also requires the DVA to report to Congress on the use of mandatory overtime and to look at how mandatory overtime is affecting medical errors. Further, the law requires the DVA to report on the use of education waivers under the Nurse Qualification Standards.

The law improves the retirement for registered nurses (RN's) and corrects an anomaly in the retirement of part-time RN's. The provision dealing with RN retirement and unused sick leave will take effect 60 days after January 23 and will apply to individuals who separate from service on or after that effective date. The law also establishes a National DVA Nursing Commission and contains provisions to enhance the employee incentive program and education debt program.

## AFGE's 2002 Issue Papers Are Online

Get the official 2002 AFGE Position Papers by logging onto to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org). Use the position papers as information at Local meetings and when talking with members of Congress. The following papers are available:

- General Schedule Pay
- Wage-Grade Pay
- Federal Employees Health Benefits Program
- Service Contracting
- Civil Service Reform & "Freedom to Manage"
- Social Security
- The Budget, the Tax Cuts, and the Economic Stimulus Package
- Government Pension Offset & Windfall Elimination Provision
- Minimum Wage and Low-Wage Workers
- Department of Defense
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Employment Non-Discrimination Act
- District of Columbia
- Prison Privatization
- Workers Compensation/Ergonomics
- Law Enforcement Officer Pay
- Whistleblowers Protection
- Food Safety



## 2002 Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference

Look for complete coverage, including photographs, of AFGE's 2002 Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference in the May/June issue of *The Government Standard*.



## Special Clip & Save Action Page: *Here's what you can do!*



The *Government Standard's* "On The Hill" section provides members with critical information on legislative issues effecting federal employees. Additionally, the AFGE Web site ([www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)) provides more information on all legislation. On legislative matters of special interest, the National Office often sends out an AFGE Action News e-mail alert right to your computer screen. To sign up for the AFGE Action News, log onto AFGE's Web site and click on the Action News icon. It's easy to do and it keeps you informed.

Locals can also subscribe to the Congressional Record or may be able to obtain it through their member of Congress or by logging onto <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. Information on specific bills may also be obtained from your Representative or Senator's local office, from the legislator who introduced the bill, or from the congressional committee which is handling the bill.

Below are some suggestions on how your Local's Legislative and Communications Committees can educate more members on the issues and take action.

### Education

- **Make Reports:** At every membership meeting, have one person from the Legislative Committee give a short report on the progress of the legislation that the Local and AFGE are interested in.

## Jump Into Grassroots Action *(continued from page 1)*

- **Use a Panel:** A discussion panel can be more interesting than a report. For example, when FEHBP is receiving a lot of notice, get two or three members of the committee to discuss what changes AFGE is seeking and what effect this will have on federal employees and their families.
- **Invite Speakers:** For some pieces of legislation, an informed speaker—including your Representative or Senators—can help get the issue across. Are bills calling for changes in wages and benefits or more contracting out? It is important to discuss how these bills would effect your unit/Local. Also think about inviting a personnel officer to discuss the bill and the proposed changes. Working with the Local's Communications Committee, schedule your speakers when the media are covering a bill or issue.
- **Write Special Notices:** If, for example, an important measure such as federal recognition of employee unions is under attack, the Communications Committee should explain the issue clearly in the AFGE Local newspaper or Web site. If you don't have a regular newspaper or Web site for your Local, issuing a special flyer or leaflet would drum up the support and action you seek. Be sure to disperse the leaflets in the work place, post on the bulletin board, send notices to home e-mail addresses, etc.
- **Call Your Members of Congress:** Encourage every member to go to AFGE's Web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org), and print out 30-second phone scripts on specific bills. Then, call your Representative and Senators to express your views. Be prepared and well informed on what you will be discussing.
- **Write Letters:** Right after a good program or report on a particular bill, AFGE members are more prepared to do something. The Communications Committee should be ready to pass out pens, letters and/or stationery and ask AFGE members to write their Representatives and Senators expressing their views. Also, provide AFGE members with pre-written letters to be signed and sent to the editorial pages of your town, state or regional newspaper (dailies and weeklies). At the next meeting, have the Legislative and Communications Committees discuss the replies from Congress and the coverage in the newspapers. If responses and coverage are favorable, compliment your legislator on his/her position and write another letter to the editor thanking them for printing the letter. If the response and coverage are unfavorable, get more members, as well as family, friends and neighbors, to also write.
- **Keep Voting Records:** If possible, keep a large, visible voting record in the Local office or meeting hall. Mark how your members of Congress vote on important bills. Be sure to compare your Local's voting record with AFGE's voting record, which is available on the AFGE Web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org). Keep it up to date and have the Legislative Committee explain the new votes at each meeting.

Your Local's Legislative and Communications Committees can make a difference in mobilizing AFGE members to take action.

### Action

- **Visit Your Members of Congress:** Get a small delegation to visit your Representative and Senators to express your views. They are usually home during Easter, summer and Christmas recesses and on some weekends. Be prepared and well informed on what you will be discussing. Studies conclude that this is the most effective way to communicate with members of Congress.

## Talking With Congress about Wage Grade Pay

*If you agree the current Wage Grade Pay policy is unfair, use this information and the steps outlined above and take action! You CAN make a difference.*

"Not every federal employee got a 4.6 percent pay raise in January. Wage grade workers at my facility got 10 cents to ninety-three cents an hour more. That's not fair. We should get the same across-the-board pay raise as GS employees," said **Jim Brown of Local 1963** in Danville, Ill.

"We have a personal stake in changing the law. I believe we can make a difference if we call members of Congress. We must tell lawmakers that we have to work two jobs because our pay is so low. We can't afford to pay for health care. And if we don't tell them they won't know. Getting a guaranteed GS pay raise will keep us from losing more ground. But we won't get it unless we as individuals collectively go to Congress," explained **Ted Jones of Local 1674** in West Haven, Conn.

*AFGE is asking for your help to change the language in the Treasury, Postal Service, General Government Appropriations Bill to guarantee that Wage Grade workers would receive at least the annual General Schedule (GS) pay raise. If we must have a ceiling on pay raises, we should have a floor, too.*

- Blue-collar employees who work for the federal government do not receive the General Schedule (GS) annual pay raise.
- Under the GS pay system, the annual raise is both a ceiling and a floor. No GS employee may get more than the amount granted for his or her respective pay locality, but he or she can not get less, either.

- Blue-collar employees are under the Federal Wage System (FWS). Under FWS there is no minimum raise, only a limit on the maximum raise (a ceiling on pay raises). Wage Grade employees can get no pay raise or a raise of just pennies an hour.
- If Wage Grade employees can be paid no more than the GS annual adjustment, then they also deserve to receive the GS annual adjustment as a minimum wage adjustment.
- FWS rarely pays prevailing wage rates because Congress and the President have imposed a ceiling on the raises for federal blue-collar workers for the past 20 years. The ceiling is established annually in the Treasury, Postal Service, General Government Appropriations Bill. The language for the ceiling is usually in Section 613 of this appropriations bill.
- The ceiling on pay has absolutely nothing to do with prevailing private sector pay practices. Instead, the ceiling on federal blue-collar employees is based on the adjustments to the GS.
- The ceiling on wage grade pay renders the FWS data collection, analysis and pay-setting processes a futile and wasteful exercise.

### Statistics on Wage Grade Pay

Wage grade federal employees have been losing ground especially relative to federal employees paid under the GS system, because FWS employees are not provided the GS pay raise wage as a minimum.

Between 1990 and 2001, FWS workers at the lowest grades suffered a 1.7 percent decline in the inflation-adjusted real value of their pay. Blue-collar workers in the middle of the FWS classification system have seen just a 2.5 percent increase on average in their purchasing power and those at the top of the FWS scale have seen a modest 5.7 percent real increase over the past decade.

Meanwhile, under the GS system that provides a minimum across-the-board increase each year, the inflation-adjusted real value of their pay has increased anywhere from 10 percent and 23.9 percent. The variation in this range is due to locality differentials. Yet the comparison between the real changes in GS and FWS pay are stark.

The decline in real income at the lowest FWS grades has put federal employees perilously close to poverty levels. Roughly 17,500 federal employees under the FWS earn less than \$15,000 annually. Most work at the Department of Defense and at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Their pay is just above the minimum wage but these federal employees hover around the poverty level for a family of three.

# AFGE NEWS

## Philadelphia DoD Local 62 Signs Agreement

*Local Plays Crucial Role in War on Terrorism*



Local 62 Pres. **Brunson Edwards** and Brigadier General **J.A. Manguel**.

AFGE **Local 62, District 2** and the Defense Supply Center in Philadelphia (DSCP) met in October and completed the first ever Management Collaboration Agreement. The agreement—which will effect over 2,500 workers—was signed in partnership by Local President **Brunson Edwards** and Brigadier General **J.A. Manguel**. “The productive and open relationship Local 62 has with the agency led to this agreement,” said Edwards.

The agreement will enable AFGE and DSCP to take positive action on bargaining issues and concerns instead of reacting to problems after they have been identified. The agreement maintains

existing union and management rights but gives AFGE more latitude to work with management to protect members’ health, safety and other interests in their jobs, such as the performance and the future of the agency.

Since September 11, 2001, DSCP and over 550 members of Local 62 have been working in harm’s way because they supply goods and services to warfighters in all services. AFGE members are responsible for feeding and clothing the warfighters, as well as ensuring necessary medicines are available.



Local 1995’s VP **Dan Doyle** and **Heather Quedenfeld** show the toys donated by AFGE members.

### BOP Local 148 Raises \$21,000

On Nov. 13, runners from Bureau of Prisons **Local 148** set out from Lewisburg, Pa., to New York City in a relay run to benefit the families of the fallen New York police officers and fire fighters. 78 central Pa. law enforcement officers participated in the 250-mile run, including 42 Lewisburg staff members, 34 Allenwood staff members, two Schuylkill staff members, and two Mahanoy Township police officers. The group raised over \$21,000. In addition to thanking everyone who ran, drove and contributed, the Local would also like to express a special thanks to Warden **Romine**, **A.W. Hobart**, Captain **Ey**, **Bruce Densberger**, **Dave Fogelman**, and **Jeff Pealer** for their vision, support and planning.

### AFGE Salutes Members Called Up to Active Duty

*Calling all Guards*

*The Government Standard* salutes the following AFGE members who have been called up or are on standby to be called up in the National Guard and Reserve: **Walter McCoy** and **Barbara Darby** of DVA **Local 2798** in Washington, D.C.; **Stan Peterson** and **Herbert Romero** of **Local 2313** at the Federal Corrections Institution (FCI) in Safford, Ariz.; **Vincent D. Greer** and **Alan W. Mollet** of **Local 1304** at the FCI in Greenville, Ill.; and **Kenneth Battle**, **Gerry G. Fetalvero**, **Gary C. Fraley**, **Johnson B. Freeman**, **Freddie Garcia**, **Jerry R. Goodwin, Jr.**, **Johnny Grant**, **Mark T. Hervey**, **Charles L. Jones, Jr.**, **Kevin P. Peters**, **Robert F. Porter**, **John J. Urbanski, Jr.**, and **Joseph A. Walker** of **Local 1869** at the Charleston, S.C. Air Force Base.

Thank you to the following AFGE members and leaders for submitting information to ‘Calling All Guards’: Admin. Asst. **Evelyn Pender** of **Local 2798**, Chief Steward **Jackie White** of **Local 2313**, President **Dan Gable** of **Local 1304** and **District 5** National Vice President **Mary Lynn Walker**.

*The Government Standard* would like to continue recognizing AFGE members, or loved ones of members, who serve in the Reserves or the National Guard and have been called up to active duty. If you know of such a person, please send his or her name, AFGE Local number, job title, your contact information, and—if possible—a photograph. Send the notice and picture to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: Calling All Guards, 80 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. If you can send a photo, be sure to identify everyone in the picture. All photos become property of the AFGE Communications Dept.



(l-r) **Local 3977** Pres. **Richard McNeill**, **Walter Cox** and VP **Horace Graham**.

### Local 3977 Delivers Holiday Meal & Gifts

At the Federal Prison Camp at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, N.C., members of AFGE **Local 3977** delivered their third annual Thanksgiving meal to a needy family in the Goldsboro community on Nov. 21. In addition to delivering a Thanksgiving turkey, the Local also delivered Christmas gifts and holiday cheer to the family in December.

**Remember to send us your photos!**



### Energy Local 1995 Donates Toys

The 2001 Morgantown, W.V., community holiday toy drive was a great success due in large part to AFGE members from **Local 1995** at the U. S. Department of Energy. The Local donated over \$250 worth of toys to the toy drive, enough to fill a pick-up truck.

### What is Your Local Doing?

We’re here to report what you’re doing! What has your Local been doing? Send us a story and picture to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: Local News, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Or, e-mail it to [communications@afge.org](mailto:communications@afge.org). If you’re sending a photo, please be sure to identify everyone pictured. All photos and stories become property of the AFGE Communications Dept.

### INS Local 2859 Reaches Out to Community

**Local 2859** Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) inspectors at the Grand Avenue Port of Entry in Nogales, Ariz., sponsored a family which included **Erika** (12), **Alejandro** (11) and **Patricia** (10), for their annual Christmas public outreach project in 2001. AFGE members collected nearly \$800, which was used to purchase gifts and dinner certificates. In addition to money raised for the family, boxes of clothing were also donated. The local food bank also donated two boxes of non-perishable items, while the AFGE members purchased turkeys for a special holiday dinner. Many other gifts were donated including a guitar for Erika (an item she had been wishing for) and an electric organ.