



*The Government* American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO  
Vol. LXIX, No. IV July/August 2002

# STANDARD

for current and retired government workers and their families since 1933

www.afge.org

## AFGE DEMANDS UNION PROTECTION

*AFGE Fights to Save the Civil Service*



Four aides to President **George W. Bush** conceived the proposal to create the Department of Homeland Security. The new department will combine approximately 24 agencies, affect 169,154 federal employees and carry a first-year budget price tag of \$37.45 billion. Congress, the only branch in the federal government with the authority to create agencies, was not consulted on the reorganization proposal—learning of it the evening of June 5, during the President's primetime TV address. Interestingly, Bush challenged Congress to "move quickly, this year, before the end of the congressional session" to create this cabinet-level agency.

Less than two weeks later, legislation drafted by the Bush White House to create the new depart-

ment was delivered to Congress. AFGE decried the Administration's attempt to destroy basic civil service standards for thousands of federal workers who would be folded into the proposed department.

AFGE believes the proposed legislation would grant the new agency's managers blanket authority to set pay and other conditions of employment without regard to existing rules or protections.

"This bill has the potential to allow the new Department to engage in personnel actions that are today illegal, such as picking out individual employees for transfer or removal from their jobs," said AFGE National President **Bobby L. Harnage**.

*(see AFGE Fights to Save Civil Service on page 6)*

### AFGE Turns 70

*Bulgarelli Wins Essay Contest*

To have current and retired members tell the world what their union means to them is the best way for AFGE to celebrate 70 years. Be sure to read the winning and selected essays on page 4.

### Activism Saves Lives

*An AFGE Success Story*

AFGE **Local 1023** represents workers at the Mint's Philadelphia plant, the largest minting operation in the world. The plant is one of two in the U.S. that produces as many as 28 billion coins in a single year (Denver being the other). Producing that amount of coinage requires a skilled work force and a safe facility. Up until May of 2002, the Philadelphia Mint only had skilled workers.

*(see Activism Saves Lives on page 7)*

### Quotable Quotes

"I think unions are about more than simple collective self-defense. They are also wonderful institutions of free association. They are in many ways, a reflection of the essence of our Republic. Participatory and democratic, they reflect the ideals of America itself."

This statement, by Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary **Tommy Thompson**, was made during the recent signing ceremony of an agreement between AFGE & HHS.

*(see AFGE & HHS Sign Agreement on page 7)*

### Petri Shows No Remorse to Contracting Out



**Local 1882** member **John Cramer**, along with several dozen AFGE members, hands U.S. Representative **Thomas Petri** (R-Wis.) his pink slip in protest to the Army's decision to contract out the work of 400 federal employees at Fort McCoy. Well over 100 members of Local 1882 gathered outside Tomah City Hall to demand that Petri call a halt to the contracting out of their jobs.

*see page 8 for more AFGE news*

### AFGE: Over 200,000 Active Members

It's official—200,287 government employees are proud members of AFGE. In addition to the over 200,000 active members, AFGE represents some 16,700 retired government workers for a combined total of over 217,000 active and retired members.

"AFGE is widely recognized as *the* voice for government employees," said National President

**Bobby L. Harnage**. "Our union and its members are working hard to create a quality government that meets the needs of the American people. Employees recognize that they have much to offer and only by creating a strong collective voice can their views and concerns be heard at the work place and on Capitol Hill."

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Bobby L. Harnage

# AFGE Celebrates 70 Years

As AFGE celebrates 70 years as *the* federal labor union, I would like to thank every current and retired member for making this milestone possible. It is because of your belief in the importance of a labor union in the federal government that AFGE has thrived for seven decades. From the first days of the union at the height of the Great Depression to today, AFGE has influenced virtually every civil service debate that has taken place in the White House and in Congress. AFGE has worked with 12 presidents—from **Franklin D. Roosevelt** to **George W. Bush**—and negotiated with thousands of legislators to secure many of the benefits and protections federal employees enjoy today.

In 1936, it was AFGE that fought for the laws that gave annual leave and sick days to federal workers. In 1945, AFGE was there to ensure the enactment of the Federal Employees Pay Act to provide payment for overtime, night and holiday work. In 1948, AFGE secured a double-digit salary increase. Eight years later, in 1956, AFGE helped to overhaul the retirement laws, providing retirement at 55 years of age with 30 years of service. And in 1959, AFGE played a role in the establishment of the Health Benefits Act which authorized government to pay part of health insurance plans, including one government-wide plan offering service or indemnity benefits.

In 1962, the Federal Salary Reform Act increased salaries and established a new principle of comparability between federal and private industry wages. It also included an escalator cost-of-living method. In that same year, AFGE fought for Executive Order 10988 that established levels of union representation in the federal government. In 1972, AFGE lobbied hard for the Wage Grade Act that gave blue-collar, wage grade federal workers, among several things, representation in wage-setting decisions. That same year, AFGE played a role in the Federal Pay Comparability Act. In 1974, AFGE was in the middle of the revised Federal Employees Compensation Act that helped to better protect federal workers injured or made ill on the job. AFGE also

fought hard for the inclusion of employee protections in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978—protections such as the Federal Labor Relations Authority to resolve disputes, the Merit Systems Protection Board as a way to protect whistleblowers, and extending OSHA coverage to federal workers. One year later, in 1979, AFGE spearheaded the effort to create collective bargaining for D.C. workers that included bargaining for pay and benefits.

In 1986, AFGE played a role in saving the federal retirement program through the creation of the Federal Employees Retirement System and in 1990, AFGE helped to develop the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act, establishing locality pay with a goal to gradually close the 30 percent pay gap between the federal and private sectors. In 1993, AFGE fought for the issuance of Executive Order 12871, which expanded the scope of bargaining and the establishment of partnership councils. AFGE was again in the middle of sweeping reform when in 1994 Hatch Act Reform was enacted, providing federal workers many of the same rights to participate in partisan political activities as other Americans while maintaining certain protections against abuses of power. In 1995, AFGE was widely recognized as a legislative force against the two government lockouts.

AFGE has remained a force. AFGE won the 20-year fight for Firefighter Pay, spearheaded the passage of the Nurse Pay Act, and won the increase of government FEHBP contribution to a 72/28 ratio. AFGE also won hundreds of millions of dollars in back pay for overtime in virtually every agency (SSA, INS, BoP, DVA and DoD have totaled over \$400 million) and also has been able to restore pay and bargaining rights for D.C. workers, including a \$1 million settlement in 1998. We can see how important our collective strength has been over the past 70 years and we are building our strength to ensure our success over the next 70 years. In June of this year, we crashed through the 200,000 active member mark—up over 30,000 since 1991.

Today, AFGE is spearheading countless legislative initiatives to protect federal employees from contracting out and to save the very rights and benefits AFGE has secured over the course of 70 years.

For every milestone, there were at least a dozen anti-federal employee initiatives that AFGE de-

feated or cut off at the pass—the best victories may never be known.

As we celebrate 70 years, I thank you for your unyielding support of the largest federal and D.C. workers union—a union that continues to play a critical role in the greatest democracy in the world.

### Information is AFGE Power

Too much is happening in the federal government that needs your immediate attention—anti-union executive orders, massive reorganizations, the contracting out of one million jobs, legislative proposals to gut the civil service, as well as an agenda on improving pay, raising the government contribution on health insurance to 80 percent, and more.

When AFGE was founded 70 years ago, telegrams delivered the urgent news to members. Today, it's the Internet.

Because it's important that you know AFGE's official position on the issues affecting your job, AFGE created the *AFGE Action News*. Through the Internet, the *AFGE Action News* delivers union news right to your e-mail account. A user-friendly and free service available only to AFGE members, the information delivered to your computer screen helps you stay connected with YOUR union. Go to AFGE's Web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org), and look for the *AFGE Action News* icon in the lower right hand corner of the home page. Click the icon and follow the easy instructions.

Today, some 2,500 AFGE members subscribe to our free news service. How about you make it 2,501?

## New Addresses for District Offices

**District 11's** new address is 16821 SE McGillivray Blvd., Suite 204, Vancouver, WA 98683. **District 12** has relocated and the new address is 504 W. Mission Avenue, Suite 101, Escondido, CA 92025.

## Correction

**John P. Santry's** name was misspelled in the May/June 2002 issue of *The Government Standard*. Santry is Vice President of **Local 1764** at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

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## ORGANIZING NEWS

## District 10 &amp; Leveck Win Bonus Bucks

The 2001-02 Bonus Bucks Campaign has ended and the results are in. During the popular member-to-member recruitment program, 3,516 new union members were recruited. Once again, National Vice President **Roy Flores** and **District 10** will retain the much-heralded Bonus Bucks "Millennium Cup" with a District total of 542. The top Bonus Bucks Recruiter is also from District 10—**Phillip C. Leveck** of **Local 2455** with 57 new members to his credit. Leveck narrowly beat out **William Hass** of **Local 987** (53) and **Jackie Shamblin** of **Local 1242** (52) for the first place prize of \$2,500. The list to the right includes the Districts' new member totals and top Locals and recruiters, with amounts.

DISTRICT	TOTAL	TOP LOCAL	TOP RECRUITER
2	350	3975	Jeffrey Selph-19
3	271	1699	John Murphy-28
4	115	2484	Vincent Talluto-7
5	511	987	William Hass-53
6	120	1138	Pamela L. McGinnis-10
7	252	1658	Daniel Martin-23
8	186	2270	Julie A. Springer-25
9	111	2562	Marth Cutcher-Edison-21
10	542	2455	Philip C. Leveck-57
11	269	1867	Darrell Banks-15
12	430	1242	Jackie Shamblin-52
14	359	1092	John C. Payton-31



(l) **T.J. Bonner**, President of the Natl. Border Patrol Council accepts congratulations for **Leveck** from **NP Harnage** and District 10 NVP **Roy Flores** (c).

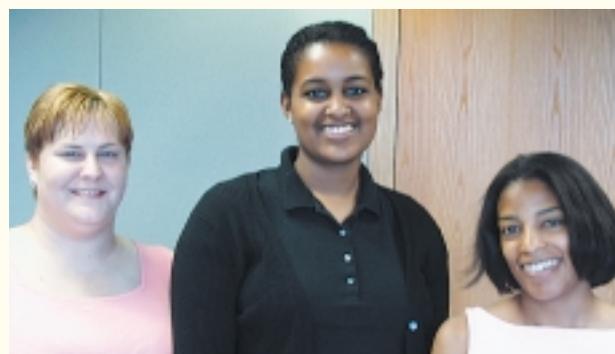
Happy 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, AFGE!

*Then and Now, WFP is Defending Your Civil Rights*

AFGE Flashback: On Oct. 30, 1991, AFGE successfully requests an amendment to the pending Civil Rights Act of 1991 that added three words "and Section 717." That reference extended all the provisions of the comprehensive Civil Rights bill to federal employees. The AFGE-sponsored amendment becomes the only amendment to the legislation. Most legislators are unaware that the amended legislation exposes the federal government, for the first time, to compensatory damages and jury trials. President **George H.W. Bush**

signs the bill on Nov. 21, 1991, and issues a lengthy memorandum interpreting the many provisions of the bill but ignoring this historic new legal right for federal workers. Fittingly, AFGE proceeds to recover the first awards for compensatory damages against the federal government the following year. Ultimately, federal employees still had to win the right to compensatory damages before the Supreme Court in *Gibson v. West*, with AFGE filing the amicus brief and also winning the Supreme Court case.

(sitting) *Women's/Fair Practices (WFP) Director **Andrea E. Brooks** (r) and Program Mgr. **Mia Smith**. (standing r-l) Sect. **Verna Pitts**, Confidential Sect. **Denene Vines** and EEO Splst. Atty.'s **Erika Guthrie** and **Jenny Celestine**. (Admin. Asst. **Joe Henderson** and EEO Splst. Atty. **Gony Frieder** are not pictured.)*



(r-l) WFP Interns **Jennifer Duckenfield**, **Chanelle Hardy** and **Alexis Blizman**.

## AFGE Picks up Police at Tracy

AFGE **Local 1546**'s win in an election for the unit of all lead Police Officers and Police Officers employed by the Defense Distribution San Joaquin County (DDJC), Defense Logistics Agency, Tracy, Calif., is one more feather in their cap. The 17-1 vote was a strong show of confidence in AFGE's ability to represent DDJC employees.

DDJC was created in a recent reorganization of two formerly separate Defense Logistics Agency facilities—the old Sharpe Army Depot and Tracy Defense Depot. The police force at the Sharpe site, already represented by Local 1546, strongly supported the move by their brother officers to AFGE, as did the small independent union that had previously represented the 32 police officers and lead police at the Tracy site.

Local 1546 President **Frank Payan** said that, "The police at DDJC are now under one command, and since the Sept. 11 attacks, the police at the two sites have been coordinating on security matters. AFGE and the independent union worked together closely in dealing with management to minimize mandatory overtime and other stresses on officers during this period. Combining forces into one union was the next logical step."

National Organizer **Joel Zamora** reports that since Sharpe and Tracy were combined through reorganization, the Local also won two other elections. One was for more than 500 Army and Air Force Exchange Service workers at Sharpe and the other was a unit of more than 600 Wage Grade employees at Tracy that had been represented by another union. On top of winning these three elections, Local 1546 has also been recruiting new members at a fast pace and has now grown to more than 800 active members.

# 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Essay Contest

— *What AFGE Means to Me* —

A number of AFGE members celebrated AFGE's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary by submitting a 100-words or less essay on what AFGE means to them. The Editorial Board of *The Government Standard* judged the essays and selected a winner. Congratulations to **Todd Bulgarelli** of **Local 722** in Olivet, Mich. He will receive an official AFGE leather-sleeved varsity jacket for submitting his 99-word essay that best described what AFGE truly means to him and to so many other members.

Every AFGE member who submitted an essay will receive a free copy of the *AFGE 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album*—a special collection of memorable *Government Standard* front-pages dating back to the first days of the union. As outlined in the contest rules in the May/June issue, the winning and selected essays are reprinted below.

## “I’m Union”

My membership with AFGE has changed my outlook on organized labor and enriched my relationship with my family. Before joining AFGE, I had only a vague idea of what unions were for and the rights they protected. But with AFGE, I've gained a better understanding of unions and why they're important. Even more significant is the strengthening of my relationship with my family. My father and grandparents are all active or retired union members, and my AFGE membership has allowed me to carry the banner of organized labor into the third-generation, so that I, too, can say I'm union!

— **Todd Bulgarelli, Local 722**,  
Food Inspector, USDA-FSIS, Olivet, Mich.

## “My valentine to AFGE”

It came on Valentine's Day 2001. It was a message from my Local President telling my fellow SSA employees and myself that my office would be closed. I was crushed. Union. Jobs. America. Those were concepts that my grandfather, **Max Yampol**, who came to America on a cattle boat, taught me. As a child, he pinned his union button on my shirt. Evenings when I asked where he went, my grandmother would say “union meeting.” All jobs, he told me, should have dignity; unions fight for workers in America. So, as a veteran and new SSA employee, I was proud to join AFGE, whose AFL-CIO affiliation included his union and the rest of labor.

So, when I got the Valentine's Day e-mail in 2001, I gathered myself up, took a deep breath and remembered my grandfather's teaching. I told each of my fellow workers whom I represent as the office AFGE Rep that we would fight. That day I called my Congresswoman **Barbara Lee**, contacted the radio station and the battle began. Four weeks later in March 2001, we learned the decision was reversed. Our office was saved. Thanks to being a part of AFGE, 15 jobs in one federal facility were saved. Union. Jobs. America. AFGE. Nothing more needs to be said.

— **Howard Egerman, Local 3172**,  
SSA Claims Rep., Oakland, Calif.

## “AFGE protects employee rights”

Entering federal service, I was aware of unions as a whole but had no previous involvement with them. Ten years later, and an AFGE Local President for almost four, I have a better understanding of what AFGE does for its members. It protects employee rights, both locally and nationally, standing behind us and with us, every step of the way.

The events of September 11, 2001, put into stark perspective the services that public servants, to include federal employees, provide to the public as a whole. I am glad to be a part of AFGE, protecting those that serve others.

— **Marie Brochu, Local 3698**,  
DVA, Manchester, N.H.

## “I believe in the message of unionism”

I am a second-generation AFGE member. I have watched AFGE take up the fight for our benefits and working conditions, improving my life as well as my family's. AFGE has given me the opportunity to become an activist, which will help those who come after me to have an even better life. I believe in the message of unionism from AFGE. With AFGE in my corner, my career assisting the veterans of this country has been an extremely rewarding one.

— **Mark G. Phillips, Local 2054**,  
Technical Support Asst., Central Arkansas  
Veterans Healthcare System, Pharmacy  
Service, Sherwood, Ark.

*“...my AFGE membership has allowed me to carry the banner of organized labor into the third-generation, so that I, too, can say I'm union!”*

— Todd Bulgarelli, Local 722

## “AFGE has won numerous benefits and rights”

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AFGE is important to me because AFGE has significantly changed my work place and me for the better. Through national contracts, AFGE has won numerous benefits and rights for Social Security employees over the years. Equally important, the union has vigorously defended them in the workplace, courts, and Congress. As a result, I have an important and gratifying voice at work to protect and improve my career and those around me. This is profoundly dignifying and permits me to best serve my co-workers and the American people. Consequently, I look forward to many more AFGE anniversaries.

— **Shaun O'Connell, Local 1760**,  
Disability Examiner, SSA, New York, N.Y.

## “People don't always follow the law and that's where we come in”

After joining the union, I was just a paying member. The learning was still an ongoing process. Later I was approached to serve in the union. I have been serving as an officer for the last few years. Currently, I'm serving as a union representative and VP of our Local. During this time I have become very informed on the activities of the government in the capacity of employee labor issues.

There is so much to learn in this business. My union activities and learning experience enable me to help fellow co-workers with some of their labor issues. The fact that my job is acquisitions, I am familiar with looking up and interpreting regulations. There are many regulations that govern labor activity, but people don't always follow the law and that's where we come in.

— **Joseph Brown, Local 2275**,  
Contract Specialist, GSA, Richmond, Calif.

## “I'm happy to carry on their tradition”

I'm convinced that the best way to promote the value of Social Security is through AFGE. I accomplish this by participating in AFGE's Legislative Conference, in the Chicago Federation of Labor and other community groups, and through our Local's newsletter.

I've had fun and met wonderful people in AFGE. I'm also proud to carry on a family tradition. My father was a union steamfitter. My mother, now retired, worked in a unionized supermarket. She never missed a union meeting in 28 years. I'm happy to carry on their tradition and to increase the visibility of women in the labor movement.

— **Catherine A. Mulligan, Local 1395**,  
Benefit Authorizer, SSA, Chicago

# THE AFGE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ALBUM



A window to some of the greatest events in AFGE history, *The Government Standard* continues to document countless legislative and organizing victories.

A great gift and resource for every current, retired and potential AFGE

member, the Album highlights enormous sacrifices made by millions of AFGE members since AFGE was founded on August 18, 1932.

Order copies for coworkers, family and friends. An affordable hand-out or give-away at any AFGE Local,

Council or District meeting. Ideal for lobby days, Lunch & Learns or orientations.

Be a part of AFGE's history and future—order the special collection of memorable front-pages of *The Government Standard*, TODAY!

## Yes, I want the AFGE 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Album

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- Plan HH:** 1,000 copies for \$3,000 (save \$4,000 = 571 FREE copies)

Please send me Plan \_\_\_\_\_ for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please make checks payable to AFGE and mail to: AFGE Communications Department—10th Floor, ATTN: AFGE 70th Anniversary Album, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Orders should be placed by September 1. Orders will be filled within 4-6 weeks from the closing date to allow for printing and delivery. Do not send cash. For more information, call (202) 639-6419 or e-mail [70years@afge.org](mailto:70years@afge.org).

## ON THE HILL

### AFGE Fights to Save the Civil Service

(continued from page 1)

AFGE strongly believes that in opening the door to hiring and firing on the basis of politics and favoritism, the legislation would impose a modern day spoils system, undermining the nation's long-standing civil service principles that ensure the integrity of our government. "It fundamentally alters the current system of checks and balances that works so successfully to protect both taxpayers and employees as the important missions of the federal government are carried out," said Harnage.

The President's bill would give the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to establish regulations jointly with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to create a 'human resources management system' that could make virtually all current civil service protections inapplicable to employees of the new Department. Further, the legislation is silent on the question of whether the new agency will recognize existing unions that represent more than a third of those who would be moved into the new agency.

*"This bill has the potential to allow the new Department to engage in personnel actions that are today illegal, such as picking out individual employees for transfer or removal from their jobs."*

—AFGE President Bobby L. Harnage.

There is a belief that the proposal appears to be an attempt to punish and blame rank and file federal employees for the security lapses that made our nation vulnerable to the September 11 attack. "This blame is mislaid, and the punishment unwarranted," stated Harnage.

AFGE contends that homeland security requires a secure work force. Federal employees need the protections of a system that allows them to speak out about mismanagement in the new agency, without fear of losing their job.

AFGE is working with Congress to ensure the bill includes the continuation of existing union contracts and protections for all employees who currently have such protections. Further, AFGE believes the Human Resources Management System should be applied only to managers in the new agency.

"If the President wants 'flexibility' to make the new agency effective and efficient, he should direct his attention to those responsible for shaping its mission: the managers and executives, not rank and file federal workers," concluded Harnage.

### AFGE Legislative Updates

For information on all of AFGE's legislative issues, log onto [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

### New department created from pieces of others

Government employees scattered throughout departments would be working in the Homeland Security Department being created to consolidate anti-terrorism efforts. It's easy to draw a new organizational chart, but corporate management experts say it's unlikely the department will run efficiently for years.

	Current department	Estimated full-time employees
<b>Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear countermeasures</b>		
Civilian Biodefense Research Programs	Health and Human Services	150
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory	Energy	324
National Biological Weapons Defense Analysis Center	new	new
Plum Island Animal Disease Center	Agriculture	124
<b>Information analysis and infrastructure protection</b>		
Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office	Commerce	65
Federal Computer Incident Response Center	General Services Administration	23
National Communications System	Defense	91
National Infrastructure Protection Center	FBI	795
National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center	Energy	2
<b>Border and transportation security</b>		
Immigration and Naturalization Service	Justice	39,459
Customs Service	Treasury	21,743
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	Agriculture	8,620
Coast Guard	Transportation	43,639
Federal Protective Services	General Services Administration	1,408
Transportation Security Agency	Transportation	41,300
<b>Emergency preparedness and response</b>		
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Independent agency	5,135
Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Response Assets	Health and Human Services	150
Domestic Emergency Support Team	Interagency group	N/A
Nuclear Incident Response	Energy	N/A
Office of Domestic Preparedness	Justice	N/A
National Domestic Preparedness Office	FBI	15
Secret Service	Treasury	6,111
<b>Total</b>		<b>169,154</b>

Source: White House

## SENATORS SIGN LETTER OPPOSING QUOTAS

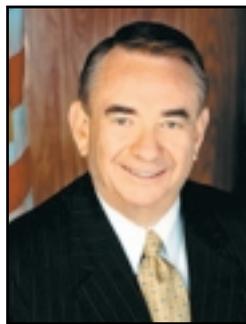
Twenty-six U.S. Senators have signed a letter that calls for the abolition of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) outsourcing quotas. Under President **Bush's** personal direction, OMB has told agencies to review for outsourcing—either through public/private competition or direct conversions—at least 425,000 jobs by the end of 2004.

Senator **Paul Wellstone** (D-Minn.) led the effort to round-up support for the letter and was assisted by Senator **Barbara Mikulski** (D-Md.). The letter was sent to Senator **Byron Dorgan** (D-N.D.),

chair of the Senate Treasury-General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, who will consider the inclusion of a provision in this year's Treasury-General Government Appropriations Bill that would prevent the use of the OMB outsourcing quotas. While agencies could continue to contract out for their own purposes, they would no longer have to comply with OMB's outsourcing quotas. A complete list of the 26 Senators who signed the letter can be found on AFGE's Web site, [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

*“You represent the best of our work force, and indeed the best of America. The British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin many years ago said, ‘Had employers of past generations ... dealt fairly with their men there would have been no unions.’ I think he was only partly right. I think unions are about more than simple collective self-defense. They are also wonderful institutions of free association. They are in many ways, a reflection of the essence of our Republic. Participatory and democratic, they reflect the ideals of America itself.”*

—Tommy Thompson  
at the signing.



Tommy Thompson

AFGE and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) signed a Labor-Management Cooperation Agreement that will enhance and maintain a strong, cooperative relationship between labor and management at all levels and work sites at HHS nationwide. AFGE National President **Bobby L. Harnage**, HHS Secretary **Tommy Thompson** and other labor and HHS management leaders signed the agreement.

“Workers in the NIH and CDC were on the front lines of the anthrax terror attacks of last fall—they did themselves and our nation proud,” said Thompson of AFGE members at the ceremony. An 18-member Labor-Management Coopera-

## AFGE & HHS Sign Agreement

tion Council will work to identify HHS-wide strategies, policies, programs, tools and initiatives that will help union officials and management to achieve agreement goals. The Council will work with designated individuals, teams, groups and organizations to advise, assist, monitor and approve development and implementation of the agreement. Work plan elements for the Council in 2002 consist of improving organizational effectiveness, strengthening labor-management cooperation, and improving employee communication. One representative from AFGE, the Laborers International Union of North America and the National Treasury Employees Union will sit on the Council, as well as one representative from each HHS operating division.

## Activism Saves Lives

*(continued from page 1)*

Local President **Bill Beckham** and Local Health & Safety Specialist (H&S) **Bob Carr** knew the plant was unsafe. Common sense told them that tons of stacked coins next to workstations were unsafe and had the potential of crushing a worker to death. Common sense told them that forklifts should not be traveling in the same areas as pedestrians—it was only a matter of time before a worker would be impaled. Plant managers disagreed with the Local. It would take two years of struggle and the closing of the Philadelphia Mint before plant management understood the problems.

When health and safety concerns fell to the deaf ears of management, Beckham and Carr educated themselves on Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Carr, with the full support of the Local and Beckham, began filing health and safety complaints with OSHA. Management did nothing to remedy the problems, telling OSHA they had their own ten-year plan to fix the violations. The vicious cycle went on for two years until OSHA had enough.

Between January and June of 2001, OSHA conducted a comprehensive inspection of the plant, a.k.a. a wall-to-wall inspection. What OSHA uncovered in the wall-to-wall was astonishing—a total of 139 violations. Some of the violations did include four-thousand-pound coin tanks stacked next to worker stations and forklifts traveling through unmarked pedestrian lanes. One viola-

tion involved employees in one department that had only one fire escape route—right into an area loaded with potentially explosive compressed-gas cylinders. In another violation, inspectors found that the hepatitis B vaccinations were not made available to Mint police who respond to bleeding or injured employees. Other violations ranged from unmarked exits to faulty ladders. Once Mint Director **Henrieth Fore** was informed of the excessive violations, she ordered an unprecedented closing of the Philadelphia plant. While the Mint was closed, employees still reported to work and were in a paid status, thanks to Fore.

During the six-week closing, AFGE and the U.S. Mint worked side-by-side on the plant floor to correct the violations and began to properly certify and train workers and managers in health and safety regulations. Together, the majority of the violations were corrected and the Philadelphia Mint was finally a safe facility.

On May 3, 2002, at the reopening of the Philadelphia Mint, AFGE National President **Bobby L. Harnage** met with the Local before touring the plant. Harnage told the AFGE members from both shifts that AFGE’s National Office supports its Locals and its members, doing all it can to help — in this case, working closely with Director Fore through the National Partnership.

“We commend Director Fore for her leadership in addressing the many safety violations at



AFGE National President **Bobby L. Harnage** joined U.S. Mint Director **Henrieth Fore** at the official reopening.

the Mint,” said Harnage. “We are optimistic that this remarkable progress will continue, working together with AFGE Local 1023, to resolve any remaining problems. Procedures need to be established and strictly adhered to so that conditions are never allowed to deteriorate to this level again.”

This was a success story because AFGE members received the support of their Local President and worked with the Local. Through that collective support, the Local was able to gain the support of the AFGE District Office, Council and the National Office.

What can you do if you detect serious health and safety violations in the work place? First contact your Local President and then get educated and active. Your involvement, through your Local, can also become an AFGE success story!

## AFGE NEWS



### Local 1482 Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Roy and Carol Manis (sitting) with family. Roy is a 51-year member of Navy-USMC Local 1482 in Barstow, Calif. Manis' name appears on the original AFGE certification of affiliation. More than 145 members and their guests celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Local with an awards ceremony, dinner, cake and dancing. The Local had no idea the event was going to be such a success. Are you thinking about celebrating a Local or Council milestone? If so, be sure to contact the AFGE Membership & Organization Dept. for award certificates and length-of-membership pins, (202) 639-6410.*



### District 11 Recognizes Members of Local 498

*Several members of DVA Local 498 in Tacoma, Wash., recently reached union membership milestones and were presented official District 11 jackets. Congratulations to (front row) Herbert Glines (22 yrs.), Sarah Jones (25 yrs.), Esther Cade (24 yrs.), (back row) James Ray (29 yrs.), David Wheeler (34 yrs.) and Michael Zeka (for his continued office assistance).*

### We're Here to Report What You're Doing

What's your Local or Council up to? Send a photo and a short note to: *The Government Standard*, 80 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. All photos become property of the AFGE Comm. Dept.

### Local 2484 Helps Workers

**Local 2484** President **Jeff Slater** is happy to announce that the Local, working with management at the 1110th Signal Battalion in Maryland, was able to change approximately 40 employees from GS-0391 to the new IT career field of GS-2210, effectively giving the employees an average of \$5,000 more per year. The Local plans on asking the employees, who now have more money in their pockets because of AFGE, to become members of the Local.



### DVA Local 2245 Shows Non-Pro Appreciation

*(l-r) Harvey Casey, Jr., a Licensed Practical Nurse, Local 2245 Pres. Kevin Flanagan and Samantha Butler, a Nursing Asst., at a special appreciation to members during National Nurses Week at the DVA Hudson Valley Health Care System, Castle Point, N.Y., campus. "Non-professionals in the DVA are overworked, under appreciated and under paid," said Flanagan. "AFGE cares about the non-professionals working in the DVA."*



### AFGE District Results

#### NEC Meets

*Every three years, AFGE members elect the National Vice President (NVP) in their Districts. In accordance with AFGE's Constitution, elections were held in May of 2002. AFGE's three elected National Officers—National President **Bobby L. Harnage** (front and center), National Secretary-Treasurer **Jim Davis** (fourth from the left) and Women's/Fair Practices Director **Andrea Brooks** (third from the right)—welcomed the elected NVP's to Washington, D.C., in June for AFGE's National Executive Council (NEC) meeting. AFGE's NEC is made up of the three National Officers and the 12 District NVP's. (Front row l-r) District 9-Michael Kelly; District 8-Terry Rogers; District 7-Dorothy James; Davis; Harnage; Brooks; District 5-Charlotte Flowers; and District 10-Roy Flores. (Back row l-r) District 11-Gerald Swanke; District 2-Derrick Thomas; District 14-Russ Binion; District 3-Jeffrey Williams; District 6-Arnold Scott; District 4-Joseph Flynn; and District 12-Eugene Hudson.*

## Calling All Guards

The following members have been activated: DVA **Local 217** President **James Bartlett** has been activated in the Air Force Reserve based at Charleston Air Force Base (AFB), S.C., and **Local 2157** member **Kirk D. Rasmussen** of Portland, Ore., has been activated by the Air Force.

**Local 1213** in Honolulu proudly represents DoD employees of the Hawaii Natl. Guard and Hawaii Air Natl. Guard. Local President **Brian Y. Takafuji** wrote that 95 percent of the bargaining unit are part-time Natl. Guard military members and many members are serving on military duty. One squadron in the bargaining unit, the 169<sup>th</sup> AC&WS, has been activated—some 90 members. Many more members have made tremendous sacrifices working grave shifts and/or weekend shifts.



*Local 217 President James Bartlett*



*Local 2157 member Kirk D. Rasmussen*

"I would not be able to list every member's name of our Local who is serving our Nation in a military capacity—I hope this letter could recognize them all."

Thank you Local 217 Chief Steward **Gerald Henry**, Local 2157 President **Linda A. Davis** and Takafuji for recognizing our AFGE brothers and sisters who are fighting the war on terrorism.