



AFGE Members Oppose Pentagon Plan



Members of AFGE Local 1658 rallied in front of the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command in Warren, Mich., on May 30.

Aware that the Pentagon's Personnel Plan, on a fast-track in the House and Senate, could easily turn into a model for other agencies, AFGE immediately began spreading the word among its ranks. BEWARE—this legislation has the potential to negatively affect EVERY federal worker, not just the 700,000 civilian employees in the Department of Defense (DoD). The rapid response by AFGE members, potential members, families and friends to fight the Pentagon's attack on civilian defense employees has been nothing short of amazing. *(More on page 4)*

AFGE Warns U.S. Senate of Grave Consequences

When Defense Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld** went before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in early June to plead his case for the Pentagon's destructive personnel proposal, AFGE was there in force. In a room jammed with reporters and Pentagon staff, AFGE National Officers and Vice Presidents (who voted unanimously to adjourn the National Executive Committee meeting to attend the hearing), as well as a significant number of AFGE members, made their presence known. Rumsfeld—together with General **Richard Myers**, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dr. **David Chu**, Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness—tried to convince the committee that if America is to succeed in the War on Terrorism, employees must give up their civil service protections and collective bargaining rights.

(More on page 5)

AFGE emphasized that DoD is not a private concern created for the making of profits; it exists to protect the American people from harm.

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AFGE Appears Before National Press Club

AFGE National President **Bobby L. Harnage**, along with AFGE members from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), appeared at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on June 9. It was the first time AFGE, which was founded 71-years ago, has appeared before the prestigious club for journalists. Reporters with many of the nation's premier media outlets—the Associated Press, Reuters, *The Washington Post*, *U.S. News & World Report*, etc.—covered the event. C-SPAN provided live television coverage.

Harnage discussed AFGE's ongoing campaign to bring collective bargaining rights to TSA screeners, as well as ways to strengthen the professional workforce. He also addressed the importance in keeping airport security out of the hands of private contractors. **Alfunzo Staley**, **Les Marzke** and **Cynthia Cavalie**, TSA screeners from Detroit, Orlando and JFK, respectively, discussed the many ways TSA managers are harassing and mistreating employees, including firing those serving in the National Guard and Reserve—a clear violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. To view or purchase the video of this event online, log onto www.afge.org.



Bobby L. Harnage, Sr.

A Message from National President Bobby L. Harnage

A Strong Collective Voice, A Secure Workforce, A Safe America

A *Strong Collective Voice, A Secure Workforce, A Safe America*, the theme for AFGE's 36th National Convention, describes who we are and the struggles we face. We are people who do what we do every day to help create a better America for our fellow citizens and for generations to come. It also describes our struggle as unionists who seek to create the opportunity for a better life in America for our members, our families and our children, and for those who seek to join us in solidarity as future AFGE members and fellow members of the labor movement at large.

A Strong Collective Voice, A Secure Workforce, A Safe America flows from the shared vision we crafted together in Chicago at the National Leadership meeting in August of 2002. For the first time, AFGE had a message that described not just what we wanted the future to be—it also defined our purpose for being.

AFGE's Vision is *to promote and protect the best interests of workers in government service by ensuring justice, equality, fairness and dignity so that the principles of freedom, democracy and justice flourish and endure*

in our nation. This Vision acts as our rudder in a world that has changed so much since August of 2000.

Over the last three years, we have witnessed changes that directly affected all of us. Here are a few:

- Through a series of Executive Orders within the first 30 days of his presidency, **George W. Bush** abolished labor-management partnerships, reduced the scope of bargaining, eliminated the ban on contractors that previously broke laws, canceled several health and safety grants, and signed a law at the request of big business to roll back ergonomic safety regulations;
- The U.S. economy has gone into a tailspin with almost four million fewer jobs today than in 2000, the worst job record since the Great Depression;
- Massive tax cuts tilted to the wealthiest one percent continue to shift both income and wealth away from the middle class and into the pockets of millionaires and billionaires;
- Corporate thefts and abuses of the greatest order are leaving the little person without savings while business executives remain financially secure, demonstrating the lawlessness associated with deregulation known to every American as Enron, World Com and Arthur Andersen;
- 9/11—a day we shall never forget;
- America has fought two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, with other international crises looming;
- Collective and union rights were taken away by the President from two agencies—U.S. Attorneys' Offices within the Department of Justice and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency;
- The White House ran a five-month political campaign to win control of the Senate and dismantle the civil service and collective bargaining rights through legislation to create a Department of Homeland Security (DHS);
- While the world watched a bronze statue of **Saddam Hussein** fall in Baghdad, the Pentagon began promoting legislation to

- go even further in dismantling the civil service and union rights in this country;
- OMB mandated agencies to compete or contract out almost one million jobs and changed the rules to eliminate the possibility of a fair bidding process;
- Protections governing discrimination have been attacked; and
- D.C. workers also saw greater management freedoms (to discipline and fire) become law.

Our environment has radically changed in three short years. These changes have created the most dangerous atmosphere for government workers and working families that I have witnessed in my lifetime. Despite the assaults and uncertain times, AFGE has not withered nor wavered from our Vision. For 71 years, since August 18, 1932, AFGE has been building our union's strength and capacity to promote our members' interests. AFGE will continue to do that for decades to come through the Mission we also set in Chicago.

Our current charge is *to quickly and effectively build the power and influence of our union by organizing, educating and mobilizing workers in government service to collectively advocate in the workplace, the community, the media, and the political and legislative processes at all levels of government.*

The threat is real, the challenge is now, and the future is ours—it is up to us. We must act decisively, and we must act in unity, and we must act now. This is a fight we have engaged with the understanding that it will last two to three years at best and we must persevere, endure to stay in the fight. Our Strategic Plan is our battle plan, our road map to success, which we must immediately and completely implement.

Federal and D.C. workers have the power to create a future that looks far better than the present. Together, we will make it happen!

CORRECTION

In the June 2003 issue, two Locals were misidentified in "AFGE Locals in Ariz. Rally 1,200+ to Save Government." The correct Locals are **Locals 3694** and **2391**.

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AROUND THE HILL

Help Ensure a 4.1% Pay Increase, for ALL Federal Workers

The House Transportation, Treasury and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee is expected to consider the bill that governs pay for all federal employees as early as the first weeks in July. AFGE expects that the Senate Transportation, Treasury, and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee will also move forward with a bill in July. President **Bush's** FY 2004 budget proposes a 4.1 percent pay increase for military personnel but only a two percent increase for federal General Schedule (GS) employees.

The President's proposal does not include a minimum annual pay raise for federal wage grade workers paid under the Federal Wage System (FWS). Given the proposed legislative changes for Department of Defense (DoD) employees and the pending status of pay for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) workers, it is also possible that these dedicated workers will not receive the GS or FWS pay increases in FY 2004. AFGE has asked federal-employee-friendly lawmakers to help us increase the proposed GS pay raise from two percent to 4.1 percent and to secure the 4.1 percent pay raise for DoD, DHS and federal wage grade workers.

Although a 4.1 percent pay increase may be included in the appropriations bill, AFGE members must be prepared to aggressively advocate in favor of a 4.1 percent pay increase amendment. AFGE members should contact specific members of Congress who are listed on AFGE's Web site, www.afge.org. Ask them to support a 4.1 percent pay increase for *all*



federal employees, regardless of whether they work under the GS or FWS pay system and regardless of where they work, be it DoD, DHS, SSA, VA or any other federal agency.

AFGE Sends Letter to DHS

Standing Up for ALL Federal Employees

AFGE sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary **Tom Ridge** on June 13, 2003, asking that Ridge exercise his management authority over the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and affirm that "TSA employees have the right to join unions and bargain collectively."

AFGE's letter stated that "neither DHS nor the public have been given a rationale for TSA's exclusion from collective bargaining beyond Admiral Loy's April 2003 statement reiterating that collective bargaining rights would interfere with DHS's ability to quickly transfer baggage screeners from one city to another."

AFGE highlighted the fact that "high level

managers from the former Customs Service, Border Patrol and FEMA have all confirmed that collective bargaining did not and will not interfere with management's ability to quickly transfer employees in an emergency."

AFGE concluded the letter by stating that "the current situation continues to create adversarial relations by unskilled managers, intimidating TSA employees who exercise their constitutional and legal rights to associate with a union. Continued failure of TSA to appropriately address this problem will give us no other option but to seek redress with the FLRA and/or the courts. We prefer to work with you in making DHS the organization you want it to be." Log onto www.afge.org for a copy of the letter.

DoD Personnel Plan UPDATE

House and Senate conferees will be meeting in the coming weeks to reconcile different versions of the FY 2004 Defense Authorization bill, which contain DoD's Personnel Plan to create a new civilian personnel system for nearly 700,000 DoD employees.

As reported in the June 2003 issue of *The Government Standard*, the House's FY 2004 Defense Authorization bill contains DoD's Personnel Plan while the Senate's does not. However, Senators **Susan Collins** (R-Maine), **George Voinovich** (R-Ohio) and **Carl Levin** (D-Mich.) introduced a separate bill on the DoD Personnel Plan that was the subject of a hearing held by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on June 4 (see article on page 5). The Collins-Voinovich-Levin bill is expected to be debated in the House-Senate conference by Collins and Levin; both are conferees.

Members Oppose Pentagon Plan (continued from page 1)

Media Campaign is Launched

Shortly after the Pentagon Plan was unveiled, AFGE developed and activated a grassroots mobilization strategy that involved reaching out to members, potential members, families and friends to fight the Pentagon's attack on civilian defense employees. In less than three weeks time, AFGE members sent over 20,000 faxes and placed thousands of phone calls to members of Congress. (During one week in May, over 700 phone calls were placed.) While dozens of Action News e-mail messages were providing updates to the field, AFGE members, potential members, families and friends were meeting with their elected officials and also delivering over 7,400 letters to local, state and national newspapers.

In addition to the waves of faxes, phone calls, e-mails, congressional visits, and letters, AFGE launched a radio advertising campaign. The ads ran in Washington, D.C., Ohio, Maine, Alabama, Oklahoma, Georgia, California and Virginia to alert DoD employees and the public that the legislation—calling for the complete restructuring of DoD's personnel system—was being rifled through Congress without adequate congressional review and public hearings.

Hats off to the following AFGE Locals for mobilizing members, potential members, family and friends to phone, fax, e-mail, write, and meet with members of Congress to fight the DoD attack on civilian defense employees. **Locals 6, 15, 54, 62, 221, 294, 506, 583, 703, 900, 904, 916, 987, 1023, 1028, 1035, 1138, 1148, 1156, 1209, 1213, 1229, 1345, 1502, 1504, 1547, 1592, 1647, 1658, 1698, 1709, 1815, 1836, 1858, 1882, 1897, 1922, 1945, 2004, 2024, 2040, 2104, 2113, 2119, 2134, 2138, 2221, 2317, 2425, 2483, 2586, 2635, 2761, 2904, 3197, 3283, 3354, 3434, 3579, 3615, and 3984.**

Has your Local been challenging DoD's Personnel Plan? If so, fill out the grassroots activists report online at www.afge.org.



Rock Island Arsenal AFGE Locals 15, 583, 703, 2119 & 2134 staged a march and rally against the DoD Personnel Plan on May 28. The marchers were greeted by Rep. Lane Evans (D-Ill.) as they arrived at the rally. Rep. Jim Nussle (R-Iowa) showed up unexpectedly and was given the opportunity to address the crowd. He stated that the bill might be "less than perfect" but work rules need to be changed. AFGE members made it clear that they consider the bill a far cry from acceptable, let alone perfect. The event received positive press coverage by all three local TV stations and two local newspapers.





AFGE Action News

E-mail News for Government Employees and their Families

SIGN UP AT WWW.AFGE.ORG

AFGE members rallied at the main gate of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash., on June 4, against DoD's plan to make the military civilian workforce more 'flexible' through the National Security Personnel System Act. Rep. Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) responded by saying, "This has nothing to do with that (national security) ... the war on terrorism does not require workers to lose their rights."





AFGE Locals 1209, 1213 and 1229 joined Rep. **Neil Abercrombie** (D-Hawaii) at a press conference on June 14 to oppose the DoD Plan. Three of the four local television stations (CBS, ABC and Fox) ran the event as their top stories. Hawaii has some 16,600 federal DoD employees.



AFGE **Local 1658** activists rallied in front of the U.S. Army Tank Automotive and Armaments Command in Warren, Mich., on May 30, supporting collective bargaining rights and opposing changes in the FY 2004 Defense Authorization bill, which allows DoD to waive some 12 critical chapters of Title 5 of the U.S. Code.

AFGE Warns U.S. Senate (continued from page 1)

Under questioning from Senators Carl Levin (D-Mich.), George Voinovich (R-Ohio), John Sununu (R-N.H.), Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins (R-Maine), Rumsfeld asserted that uniformed military personnel are doing the work of civilian defense employees because civil service rules are too cumbersome to allow the civilian workforce to complete tasks efficiently. Then he complained that 83 percent of the civilian work force in Operation Iraqi Freedom work for contractors “because, in most cases, the complex web of rules and regulations prevents us from moving DoD civilians to new tasks quickly.”

AFGE pointed out to the Senators that those contracts were awarded without competition to companies with ties to the administration and DoD employees were

never given a chance to compete for those jobs. AFGE also noted that the number of uniformed military performing non-military functions stems from the military’s career development programs and *not* from a problem in the civilian personnel system.

AFGE emphasized that DoD is not a private concern created for the making of profits; it exists to protect the American people from harm. Abolishing the protections that maintain a politically neutral civil service would render the DoD prey to cronyism and corruption—circumstances that could have grave consequences in troubled times.

Stevens echoed AFGE’s point, reminding Rumsfeld of the importance of the continuity provided by a neutral civil service. Speaking of the government workforce when the late President **Richard M. Nixon** left office in 1974, Stevens noted,

“Had we not had such a group (of government employees) during the period following the Nixon resignation, I don’t think we would have had a stable government.”

When the hearing drew to a close, AFGE officers and staff talked with reporters and lobbied Senators and Hill staff. In the end, AFGE won positive coverage in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, on the Associated Press and Reuters news wires, and at *The American Prospect Online*. AFGE and its members played a significant role in keeping the Senate version of the DoD personnel measures within more reasonable bounds than had been originally proposed, with differences between the House and Senate bills still to be ironed out in conference.

Membership into Retirement

Retired from Work, Not from the Union

Your union needs you to continue membership into retirement! The process for continuing membership has not always been easy. Action is expected at AFGE's National Convention to recover lost members and to provide an easy way for retiring members to stay members. There are a variety of reasons why AFGE members seek to continue membership upon retiring—to remain active, to socialize with former colleagues, to access benefits, to preserve health and prescription benefits, to receive discount purchasing programs, etc. AFGE plans to provide retirees with all of the above.

AFGE national officers have pledged their support to making this a reality. By the time the Convention is called to order in August, AFGE's Retiree Program will have contacted a number of retiree members in every AFGE District and formulated a plan of action. Resolutions will be offered to formally establish a retiree structure within AFGE to effectively and properly utilize the institutional knowledge retirees have gained throughout their career.

Check out the retiree section on AFGE's Web site—www.afge.org. The section, which updates information every two weeks, provides a wealth of information to current and soon-to-be retirees. Questions and comments? E-mail retirees@afge.org or call (202) 746-6707.

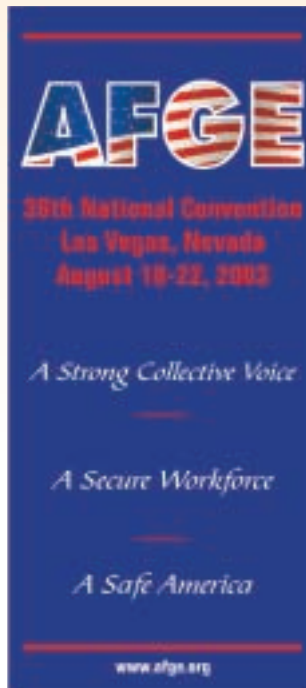
AFGE Membership Benefits

Purchase a computer through payroll deduction—be sure to check out the details on page 20. For more benefits information, visit www.afge.org or call the toll-free benefits line at (888) 844-2343. (In D.C. call 639-6941.)

Training & Career Advancement Resources

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The Graduate School has 80 years of experience in providing continuing education to working adults. As "The Government's Trainer," the school offers high-quality, cost-effective courses for people at all levels of government. The school can accommodate you, whatever your training needs are, by offering daytime, evening, weekend, long-term development, and distance learning courses. For more information or to request a catalog, call the nationwide toll free number (888) 744-GRAD or visit <http://grad.usda.gov>. The Graduate School is approved for the GSA Federal Supply Schedule.



AFGE
20th National Convention
Las Vegas, Nevada
August 18-22, 2003

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