



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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for current and retired government workers and their families since 1933
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

AFGE: What's Ahead After the Midterm Elections

There's no doubt that AFGE played a significant role in the dramatic political shift in Congress. Hundreds of AFGE staff and volunteers reached out to tens of thousands of union members through phone calls, labor walks and other get-out-the-vote activities.

"We were organized, energized and focused," AGFE PAC/Issue Mobilization Director **Bob Nicklas** said. "The 2006 election campaign was the best AFGE has ever run."

2007: We Need You to Volunteer

AFGE's voter contact program clearly works, but continued success means building on that to create an even better, more effective volunteer activist program. "AFGE volunteers, along with thousands of other labor activists across the country,

"AFGE and all of its partners delivered a message: we've had enough and we need a change."

—AFGE National President John Gage

made the difference in the outcome of the elections," Nicklas said.

"We've just begun to create a culture of volunteer activism, and we still have a long way to go," Nicklas added. "We need to build an understanding that being a union member means more

than just paying dues. Constant member mobilization is an absolute necessity in order to recruit additional activists who can help organize and mobilize potential members."

AFGE is looking to its leaders for support. "Every Local executive board member and shop steward needs to step up to the plate," Nicklas said. "Their activism is a call for other members to get involved in helping to hold lawmakers accountable."

For more information on how you can help with this new effort, contact www.itsourturn2007.com.

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DOD WORKERS COALITION Presents Oral Arguments in NSPS Appeals Case



Speaking on behalf of the 40-member United DoD Workers Coalition (UDWC), AFGE presented oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals against DoD's appeal to a court ruling that struck down portions of the agency's proposed National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

In February 2006, U.S. District Court Judge Emmet G. Sullivan's ruling gutted several NSPS provisions pertaining to labor relations, collective bargaining, independent third party review and adverse actions. Consequently, Judge Sullivan's decision on *AFGE v. Rumsfeld*—05-2183 (D.D.C. February 27, 2006)—effectively declared illegal major portions of NSPS. In April, the Department of Defense appealed that ruling.

On Dec. 11, 2006, U.S. Appeals Court Judges David S. Tatel, Stephen F. Williams and Brett M. Kavanaugh heard oral arguments from **Joe Goldberg**, AFGE Assistant General Counsel and from the Justice Department, which represented DoD.

AFGE maintained its stance that the prior District Court ruling was correct, and that it validates the coalition's claim that when it designed NSPS, the Department of Defense overreached and defied guidelines set by Congress.

AFGE has consistently maintained that NSPS and similar personnel rules stand to devastate the federal workforce by gutting worker pay, eliminating collective bargaining rights, violating employees' due process and appeal rights and wasting millions of taxpayer dollars. ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO www.afge.org.



A MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL **PRESIDENT JOHN GAGE**

Working for the Common Good

ON ELECTION DAY 2006, federal employees and working Americans told the Bush administration and Congress that the time for change is now. By electing candidates who support working families, voters made clear their desire to see a dramatic reversal in how Washington is run. They gave pink slips to lawmakers who refused to value their work and treat them with the dignity and respect they deserve. Instead of continuing to employ politicians who support the botched war in Iraq, benefits cuts for veterans and the elderly and tax cuts for the wealthy elite, Americans used their voting strength to install lawmakers who will work for the common good.

What is the common good? In an October speech to students at Georgetown University, former President Clinton expounded on this profound yet simple philosophy, and described the common good as

“...a new covenant for equal opportunity, shared responsibility, an inclusive community and an aggressive approach to try and create those values throughout the world...”

Clinton went on to say,
“...we are not perfect, we never will be perfect, no one has the whole truth, but we can always do better.”

One of the points Clinton made to further explain this philosophy is that to believe in the common good, you have to believe in equal opportunity. Clinton argued that it is not for the common good to give millionaires like himself tax cuts at the expense of college aid and funding for after-school programs for lower-income children. It's not for the common good to have corporate profits at 40-year highs while wages are flat or declining, and it's not for the common good for the United States to borrow money from other countries for millionaire tax cuts and then ask our children's generation to

In DoD's case, instead of doing the right thing and either scrapping NSPS or making drastic changes, the agency is appealing a federal court judge's ruling. Oral arguments on DoD's appeal were held December 11.

We are hopeful that we can work with the new Congress to restore funding to agencies that provide vital services to some of our most vulnerable citizens. Under this administration, we've seen veterans turned away from Veterans Affairs medical centers due to lack of funding and subsequent staffing shortages. Additionally, we've seen jobs slashed at the Social Security Administration to the point where Americans who rely on Social Security can't get the benefits they so desperately need. At the Bureau of Prisons, staffing shortages have led to an increase in prison violence that endangers both BOP employees and the communities they serve. As if that weren't enough, instead of protecting American jobs, Bush and his political appointees have given a record number of jobs to overpriced contractors. None of this is for the common good.

Lastly, we are hopeful that we can work with Congress regarding the recommendations found in the Iraq Study Group report. We were alarmed at the report's call for directed reassignments of civilian agency employees to military war zones. The study group's recommendation does little more than advocate a draft for federal workers. We are working on getting more clarification about what this recommendation means for federal employees and have reached out to members of the study group, members of Congress and Linda Springer, director of the Office of Personnel Management.

In 2006, AFGE used the theme “It's Our Turn” to describe our get-out-the vote efforts. Thanks to the hard work of AFGE members and activists, the outcome of the mid-term elections turned out to be a great moment for our union and it looks like it's finally “our turn.” However, there's no time to rest on our laurels. We must hit the ground running if we are going to work to pursue policies that will promote the common good—equal opportunity, shared responsibility and an inclusive community. We must remain committed to holding our leaders accountable and working with the new Congress to ensure that federal employees and working Americans receive the dignity, respect, wages and benefits they deserve for the outstanding job they do in service to America. ●

With the new Congress set to start work in early 2007, AFGE has an even greater chance to expand this idea of the common good to federal employees and working Americans.

pay it off, Clinton said. These are just a few of his points, and I couldn't agree more.

With the new Congress set to start work in early 2007, AFGE has an even greater chance to expand this idea of the common good to federal employees and working Americans where others have failed. For example, the Bush administration keeps trying to ram through personnel “reforms” that AFGE feels will have a devastating effect on federal workers. As a result of lawsuits brought by AFGE and its union partners, the Department of Defense's (DoD) National Security Personnel System (NSPS) and the Department of Homeland Security's MaxHR system haven't passed muster with the courts. We've shown that these “reforms” are blatantly unfair to federal workers and don't preserve collective bargaining rights and other basic worker protections.

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Announcing **Holiday Bonus Bucks!**



THIS YEAR'S Holiday Bonus Bucks campaign runs from **now through February 28, 2007**. Take advantage of this great opportunity to build your union and earn money and prizes for the holidays. For every co-worker you recruit, you'll earn \$20 from AFGE National and an additional monetary or merchandise incentive from your AFGE District Office. And if you recruit three or more members, you will receive an AFGE briefcase-style bag with leather trim—and your name will automatically be entered into a drawing for a free laptop computer! All the forms and information you'll need are on the AFGE web site: www.afge.org. Look for the Holiday Bonus Bucks under "Topics of Interest" or call the Membership and Organization Department at **202-639-6410**. ●

AFGE After the Midterms

(continued from the front page)

A New Congress: More Legislative Goals

"AFGE and all of its partners delivered a message: we've had enough and we need a change," said AFGE National President **John Gage**.

Even with the shift of power in Congress that favors the labor movement, AFGE has its work cut out.

AFGE has several objectives for the new Congress, starting with rectifying the contracting out situation. "Congress must eliminate the Office of Management and Budget's quotas and the A-76 automatic recompetition requirements," AFGE Legislative and Political Director **Beth Moten** said. "The current A-76 process is unfairly biased toward the contractors, and we want to make it right."

Also at the forefront is ensuring worker rights for departments of Homeland Security and Defense employees. AFGE

"Congress must eliminate the Office of Management and Budget's quotas and the A-76 automatic recompetition requirements."

—AFGE Legislative and Political Director
Beth Moten

took both departments to court over unfair personnel systems, and is winning both battles. DHS gave up on its appeals and AFGE just presented oral arguments in the DoD appeals case (see box on front page).

Along similar lines, AFGE has and will continue to urge Congress to give Transportation Security Administration Officers collective bargaining rights. TSA is the only AFGE-represented DHS agency not

afforded such rights. TSA also is the most mismanaged agency, with the highest rates of injury and turnover. "It is essential that Congress restore collective bargaining rights to these workers," Moten said.

Additional legislative issues include FLRA nominations, funding and decisions; bilingual pay and non-foreign cost of living adjustments; the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and federal payment for dental and vision benefits; the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Program, which reduce Social Security benefits; and the lack of 6(c) retirement benefits for some law enforcement officers.

AFGE's Legislative and Political Department also has a number of agency-specific goals. To speak to someone in more detail, please e-mail LPD@afge.org. ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.afge.org.

Members of Four AFGE Families Win the 2006 Union Plus Scholarships

Local 1770 member **Laurie Guin** of Red Springs, NC, and three children of other AFGE members were selected to receive 2006 Union Plus Scholarship awards. They were chosen from more than 5,600 applicants from 44 unions

Guin won a \$750 scholarship. The other AFGE winners are: **Kevin Michael Jakopchek**, son of Darcy Jakopchek of Kansas City, Mo., Local 1923 (\$4,000); **Ayana L. Russell**, daughter of Daryl S. Russell of Newport News, Va., Local 22 (\$4,000); and **Juliana Spector**, daughter of Richard Spector of Piedmont, Calif., Local 1923 (\$4,000).

The challenging job of selecting the winners was handled by a panel of education experts affiliated with the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the United Negro College Fund.

The stories of AFGE scholarship winners Laurie Guin and Kevin Michael Jakopchek are exemplary.

Laurie Guin

With her two oldest children in college, Guin decided that—after 22 years of raising a family and nine years as a Department of Defense employee—the time to further her education had come.

She's studying for a degree in health information technology and believes the union is just as important to her future as her studies. "Union membership is a must in order to have your voice heard," she says, noting the battle under way with DoD management concerning alternate work schedules.

With her busy schedule, Guin still finds time for extensive community ser-

vice. "I am a firm believer that you cannot expect more from your community if you are not willing to put out the effort to make it a better place," she adds.

Kevin Michael Jakopchek

With his eye on becoming an attorney and a progressive politician, Jakopchek has deep union roots. His grandfather was a union steward for more than 20 years and his father helped organize a union at his workplace. His mother also is a lifelong union member, and for the past nine years with Local 1923.



Kevin Michael Jakopchek

In addition to demonstrating academic ability, applicants are required to submit essays of no more than 500 words describing their career goals, detailing their relationship with the union movement and explaining why they are deserving of a union scholarship.

But perhaps the most important union tie for Jakopchek involves his great-grandfather, who never had a union—the coal miner was killed in an accident at a non-union mine.

"The danger of nonunionized mining is as clear today as it was 80 years ago, as evidenced by the tragedy at the nonunion Sago mine," Jakopchek argues.

He seeks a political career "to fight for workers to get the rewards they deserve. Guided by my family and my faith, one of my dearest values is that no one who works hard should be poor."

How the Scholarship Program Works

In addition to demonstrating academic ability, applicants are required to submit essays of no more than 500 words describing their career goals, detailing their relationship with the union movement and explaining why they are deserving of a union scholarship.

Individuals must be accepted into an accredited college or university, community college or recognized technical or trade school at the time the award is issued.

2007 Applications

Applications for next year's awards are for download on AFGE's website (www.afge.org) under 'Education' in the 'Member Benefits' section.

Or, send a postcard with your name, return address, telephone number and international union name to: Union Plus Education Foundation, c/o Union Privilege, P.O. Box 34800, Washington, DC 20043-4800. ●



Ayana L. Russell

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS January 31, 2007. Recipients of scholarships will be announced May 31, 2007. Due to the high volume of applications, only winners will receive notification.

AFGE Activists



House Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi and Congressman-elect Ed Perlmutter joined Barb Conklin AFGE 3607; Local 2241 Trustee Fred Johnson; Local 2241 President Lance Stewart and others.

NPO Bob Mechan, NR Dale Cox, 6th District NVP Arnold Scott

Augusta Thomas, NVP Andrea E. Brooks, Rotchild Thomas

NPO Walter Greeley

Top From Right: Mike Minnefee, Barbara Brandt, Walt Greeley, Bob Mechan
Center: Donna Pfirmman, Donna Wray
Front: Jenice Brassell and Terri Rosen

Congressional candidate Darcy Burner and LPO Cheryl Kelso

NST J. David Cox

AFGE NP John Gage with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney

"INSIDE GOVERNMENT" Celebrates Six Month Anniversary

As it approaches its sixth month of programming, AFGE's weekly national radio program "Inside Government" continues to grow both in reputation and listenership. Previous guests include AFGE National President John Gage, Democratic National Committee chairman **Howard Dean**, Newsweek columnist **Eleanor Clift**, White House Press Corps member **Helen Thomas**, OPM Director **Linda Springer**, and Virginia Congressman **Tom Davis**.

"Inside Government," a one-hour weekly nationwide radio/Internet program dedicated to issues that impact all federal and D.C. government employees, can be heard Fridays at 10:00 a.m. EST on 1050 AM in the Washington, D.C., area or on demand (available anytime) at www.federalnewsradio.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, E-MAIL
InsideGovernment@afge.org

OR GO TO www.federalnewsradio.com.

iPod Raffle



We're giving away an
iPod Nano....

AFGE members are invited to enter a drawing for a chance to win a new

4GB iPod Nano (1,000 songs), courtesy of AFGE and Apple.

Enter online or by mail. Visit the 'Computer' section on the Member Benefits page on the AFGE Website: www.afge.org, or send your name, address, Local and member number to: AFGE, M&O Department, 80 F Street, NW, Washington DC 20001. Drawing to be held on March 15, 2007.

The Apple Member Purchase Program also offers AFGE members a variety of great deals on popular Apple products. For more information, look for 'Apple Computer Discount.'

COUNCIL OF PRISON LOCALS

Steps Up Efforts to Reverse Budget and Staffing Cuts

AFGE's fight to reverse low staffing and funding levels throughout the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has garnered significant national media attention. With coverage appearing in *Time* magazine, "The Pueblo Chieftain," "Rocky Mountain News", CNN and several other media outlets and publications, AFGE's Council of Prison Locals brought significant attention to the dangerous work environments faced by BOP staff each day.

Of recent interest has been the federal Administrative Maximum U.S. Penitentiary (ADX) facility in Florence, Colo., where staffing levels have dipped so low that inmates' incoming and outgoing mail is not being screened. The ADX facility (known as Supermax) is responsible for holding the nation's most dangerous criminals, including convicted terrorists Terry Nichols, Theodore Kaczynski, and Zacarias Moussaoui. Recent meetings with U.S. Senators **Wayne Allard** (R-Colo.) and **Ken Salazar** (D-Colo.) have prompted U.S. Attorney General **Alberto Gonzales** to take steps to correct the staffing levels. Gonzales plans to tour the ADX facility in February.

CPL President **Bryan Lowry** says serious inmate overcrowding and correctional worker understaffing such as that at ADX Florence plague the BOP system, and create hazardous conditions for inmates, correctional workers, and the communities in which they work.

Hear the recent "Inside Government" radio show featuring CPL President Bryan Lowry and **Mike Schnobrich**, CPL Legislative Coordinator North Central Region at www.federalnewsradio.com on www.afge.org "Inside Government" ●

ATTENTION AFGE MEMBERS

YOU'RE INVITED

To The Annual Legislative and Grassroots Mobilization Conference

February 25-28, 2007

For registration, hotel information and other
information visit AFGE's web site page at
www.afge.org/LegislativeConference

Following AFGE Action, UN Body Tells TSA to Let Workers Organize

In November, the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO) sent a powerful message to the Bush Administration: the international community rejects the administration's attempts to limit the collective bargaining rights of government employees entrusted with protecting our nation's security. In response to a complaint filed by AFGE, the ILO ruled that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) violated the fundamental rights of 43,000 TSA officers (TSOs) by denying them the right to organize and bargain collectively.

AFGE believes, and the ILO decision confirms that President Bush abused the discretion given to him by Congress when TSA was created, and had his appointees ban collective bargaining altogether. The administration has tried to justify its decision to deny representation and collective bargaining rights to TSOs on the basis of national security, an idea that AFGE has long argued against. At a time when airport screeners need a voice on the job to highlight where improvements can be made in our national security, the Bush administration continues to stifle dialogue. The ILO decision further calls into question the administration's policy of using national security to justify the denial of basic worker rights.

The decision by the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association amplifies the

growing voices heard around the country and the world that are calling on the Bush administration to recognize internationally accepted workers' rights standards. Bush's low and mean-spirited attempt to deny collective bargaining rights to TSOs is the tip of the iceberg. If Bush and his anti-union ideologue cronies can block TSOs in their legitimate right to bargain collectively, then working people have every reason to expect that they will try to block union rights for broad groups of public safety, aviation and national security workers in both the public and private sectors.

AFGE calls for the Aviation & Transportation Security Act to be amended to restore the full scope of collective bargaining that is granted by law to federal employees. Congress must take this action in order to uphold the ILO's finding, and furthermore should do so because it is the right thing to do under American and international law.

AFGE is the only union that has actively fought on behalf of employment rights for Transportation Security Officers. Although TSOs remain deprived of a collective bargaining agreement, AFGE represents these employees before the TSA Disciplinary Review Board, EEOC, courts, in Congress and in the media. ●



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO
<http://www.afge.org/index.cfm?page=airportscreeners>

NEW
AFGE Councils!

The National Executive Council voted to disband and restructure the former C-17 NINCS/DHS into three new Councils due to the Federal Labor Relations (FLRA) determination that the previous single unit covering INS would now be three distinct bargaining units for CBP, CIS and ICE. President Gage has appointed interim representatives for each new council.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO
<http://www.afge.org/Index.cfm?Page=HomelandSecurity>

Council 117 CBP Locals

Stephen Weekes (lead), Steve Santiago, Rudy Dibene, Jerry Emory,

Council 118 ICE Locals

Cynthia Kohlmeier-Parker (lead), David Wright, Tai Sharpe, Richard Martinez

Council 119 CIS Locals

Kevin Tinker (lead), Michael Knowles, Mark Whestone, Sondra Gottschalk.

FPS Local Urges ICE to Keep Retention Allowances for Officers

A **AFGE LOCAL 918**, a national local that represents approximately 65 percent of Federal Protective Service employees, recently urged the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) management to immediately desist in its plans to discontinue group retention allowances for FPS law enforcement personnel.

Retention pay for FPS officers first was established in 2002 as a way to stave off attrition rates. In a recent memo, ICE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management Theresa Bertucci stated that retention allowances would be discontinued in January. At press time, AFGE's request to meet with Bertucci was not answered.

"We are deeply concerned that Ms. Bertucci has refused to meet with union representatives on this issue," said **David Wright**, president of Local 918, which represents some 1,000 of the approxi-

mately 1,400 FPS employees. "By cutting retention allowances, ICE has proven that it has no regard for FPS employees and little regard for the FPS mission.

"FPS officers are not afforded 6(c) retirement benefits, are subject to staff-

enforcement opportunities, where they will be respected and honored.

"It is clear that ICE and its parent DHS are systematically trying to dismantle FPS, and AFGE is not going to let that happen," Wright said.

FPS officers are not afforded 6(c) retirement benefits, are subject to staffing shortages, and continue to have basic needs taken away.

—David Wright, President, Local 918

ing shortages, and continue to have basic needs taken away," Wright continued.

"Retention pay was one of the few good things ICE provided its FPS officers. By taking it away, ICE has put the final nail in the coffin. FPS officers are going to leave the agency for local, state, or private law

FPS provides security for the federal court system and more than 90 percent of the federal buildings in the United States. In addition, FPS assists in emergency situations, such as after Hurricane Katrina when FPS officers were among the first on the scene in New Orleans. ●

Call for Civilian Deployment **Cause for Concern**

The Iraq Study Group has recently released a report and recommendations for U.S. policy in Iraq, one of which is Recommendation # 74 calling for "directed assignments" of federal employees to the war-torn country if there's a shortage of volunteers. While we're waiting for more information, AFGE is alarmed by the recommendation that is equivalent to a draft for civilians to work and live in the war zone where tens of thousands of people have perished.

Civilian employees are not military personnel. They have not signed up to live and work in life-threatening environments where bomb explosions and kidnappings are norms. This country has a system where our Army is voluntary. Why are we thinking about drafting civilians to live and work in a combat zone?

Recommendation # 74 calls for these

directed assignments for the "short term." If the short term means now, the recommendation is sending people to die in a ruined city surrounded by snipers and suicide attacks. American citizens in Iraq would be easy targets for insurgents.

"It is disturbing that we're even thinking about forcing civilians to go where military personnel and contractors are leaving. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost in Iraq, and the next casualty undoubtedly will be thousands of U.S. civilians if the ill-advised draft of civilian workers is implemented," said AFGE National President John Gage.

"Even though a small number of civilian workers, such as the diplomatic corps, knew they may be deployed overseas when they took the job, most federal employees—just like any other American—do not expect an assign-

ment that will ship them overseas away from their families. But now we're telling them they're being drafted, something the Pentagon doesn't even do to recruit more troops," he added.

Many civilian workers have already volunteered to work in Iraq. So far, about 1,500 federal employees have volunteered. More than 5,000 federal employees have been sent to Iraq as part of their Reserve and National Guard commitments. While these men and women are honoring their military commitments, we need to clearly distinguish between these decisions and those who did not volunteer for such an assignment.

Directed assignments means "go or you're fired." It is unjust, unwise, and un-American to tell civilian employees that their only choices are either losing their homes or losing their lives. ●