



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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November/December 2007

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

Now Is the Time for Action

When J. David Cox, national secretary treasurer of the American Federation of Government Employees testified in October before the House VA Subcommittee on Health, he spoke from the heart.

NST Cox, a nurse in the VA for more than 23 years and the former executive vice president of AFGE's National VA Council, told Congress it must hold the VA accountable for the deteriorating workplace conditions that are forcing qualified people out of the agency.

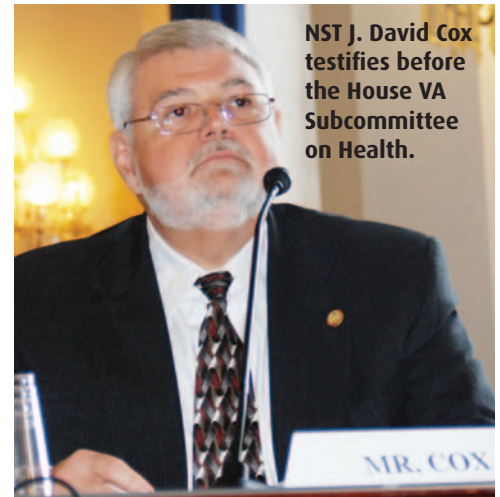
While the VA continues to face unprecedented demand for its services

from veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, qualified professionals are leaving the department for more lucrative positions in the private sector. These added pressures—coupled with providing care for the complex health needs

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of aging veterans, including a growing number in need of long term care—place severe pressures on the system.

For AFGE, the issue goes far beyond the thousands of men and women we rep-



NST J. David Cox testifies before the House VA Subcommittee on Health.

resent in the Department of Veteran Affairs. An estimated 40 percent of our members are veterans. Right now legislation is making its way through Congress that will provide full funding for Veterans Affairs and will address the issue of professional employee retention. AFGE and its National VA Council are rising to the challenge. Go to www.afge.org for more information.

Table of Contents

- 2 A Message from National President John Gage
- 3 New Initiative to Protect Disabled Veterans, Police Officers
Inconsistencies in the Hatch Act
- 4 First HISCO Conference a Success
- 5 Civil Defense Workers' Union: Keep Fort Monmouth Open
- 6 2008 AFGE District Caucus Schedules and Rules
- 10 Disabled Workers Initiative for Federal Employees
GCO Partners in Butterbaugh Claims
- 11 Bill Fletcher Jr.: New Director of Field Services and Education
Union Plus Mortgage Hotline
- 12 AFGE Fights to Protect Jobs at Sheppard Air Force Base

ELECTION NOTICE

Note: Registration deadline is 30 days prior to caucus!

Every three years, AFGE members elect the National Vice President (NVP), National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, and National Women's Advisory Coordinator to represent their District. Under AFGE's constitution, election caucuses must be held in May of 2008 in all Districts. Nominations are conducted at the District caucus through the Locals' elected delegates in accordance with Appendix A of the AFGE constitution.

The caucus rules for 2008 and the dates and locations of all the District caucuses are published in this issue on pages six-nine. Union members who wish to participate should take note of this information and direct questions to their respective NVP, whose telephone number is listed in the masthead on page two. If there are any last minute changes, Local unions will be notified directly by their NVP.

IMPORTANT CHANGE: A constitutional change enacted at the 2006 National Convention now requires that a local have paid all per capita tax due to the National Office 60 days prior to the convening of a district caucus in order for the local to vote at the district caucus. Be sure that your local will be able to vote! ●



Will America Uphold Its Promises?

It is one of the most critical tests of our values as a nation: Will our government uphold its promises to those willing to pay the ultimate price for our country?

Lately, the answer has been an appalling "No." That is a moral and national security failing that we must correct.

Treating our veterans right—showing the gratitude they have earned from a nation indebted to their sacrifice and service—starts in the Veterans Administration, at which approximately 150,000 workers are represented by AFGE. Add to that the thousands of AFGE members who currently serve their country faithfully in the armed services and at some point may need medical care and other assistance.

Yet at a time when the president claims this country is waging a global war on terror, when hundreds of thousands of Americans are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, and when our military is stretched to the breaking point, the White House has inexplicably sought to cut VA funding and undermine its capacity to serve our veterans.

This is not only a betrayal of our veterans, but it sabotages the volunteer military's

ability to recruit the soldiers it needs to meet the threats of the future.

Unfortunately, the VA has been woefully underfunded for some time. During 2005 and 2006, there was a \$3 billion shortfall in veterans health care; one consequence was a doubling of the wait list for new appointments in just one year. In addition, the Veterans Benefit Administration has seen disability and pension claims shoot up 57 percent in six years.

AFGE is fighting to make VA funding mandatory. VA health care and benefits are part of a sacred contract our nation makes with those who are called to service.

The combination of fewer resources and growing demand has caused understaffing and hurt recruitment, retention and training.

And it's only going to get worse, with nearly 263,000 returning soldiers slated to receive medical care from the VA next year alone, and chronic care needed by many of the 30,000 brave men and women who have been injured in Iraq. Adding to the potential of a catastrophic breakdown, the VA's own workforce is aging, with 44 percent of employees eligible for retirement in five years.

That's why AFGE is fighting to make VA funding mandatory. VA health care and benefits are part of a sacred contract our nation makes with those who are called to service. That contract must not be broken based on the whims of whoever is in the White House or Congress. And Congress needs to provide funding to address the backlog at Social Security where disability payments for hundreds of thousands, including Iraqi veterans, are not being processed because of severe budget cuts and staffing shortages.

That's not the only challenge. Recently, the United States Army moved to terminate security and police officers at bases across the country. These officers, many of whom are veterans, are being forced out because of a new policy aimed at eliminating long-term employees in favor of private contractors. The Army has developed new physical and medical requirements that have little

correlation with the ability of employees to perform their duties.

All we need do is look at the disaster at Walter Reed to see what happens when the government contracts vital public responsibilities out to political cronies eager to fleece the taxpayers for a quick buck. Currently, the VA is not allowed to conduct outsourcing studies to prevent funds from being diverted from medical care, but this ban is under attack; we must continue to stand strong and vigilant on this critical issue. On the flip side of this equation, we continue to fight for legislation that would allow VA employees to compete for work that already has been outsourced. Based on their dedication, skill and productivity, I have no doubt that VA employees can do a better job at less taxpayer expense than any private contractor.

Policy makers also must do a better job of providing VA employees with the tools they need to do their jobs even better. That includes improved training, stronger safety standards and expanded bargaining rights. It is absurd—and a threat to the care veterans have a right to expect—that the VA refuses to bargain over key issues such as nurse reassignment and doctors' hours. That is why we are fighting for legislation that would force VA management to negotiate over all patient care questions.

It is especially important that legislative oversight get even tougher, particularly in making the VA follow congressional intent in implementing recent laws to make doctors' and nurses' pay more competitive and to improve scheduling.

Another challenge doesn't just involve the VA but the entire federal government—maintaining our two-centuries-old tradition of veterans' preference. The Bush administration's various schemes to eviscerate the civil service—most notably the so-called National Security Personnel System (NSPS)—could make veterans the first, rather than the last, to be fired during reductions in force. So our efforts to kill off NSPS are part and parcel with our fight to protect and defend our veterans.

After facing enemy fire, suicide bombers and explosive devices, veterans deserve to return home to a world-class health care system, reliable benefits and government employment opportunities. AFGE is fighting to make sure America holds up its end of the bargain—and in the next election, our members should demand that candidates do the same. ●

AFGE—The Government Standard

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AFGE Launches New Initiative to Protect Disabled Veterans, Police Officers

Recently, the United States Army moved to terminate security and police officers at bases across the country. These officers, many of whom are veterans, are being forced out because of a new policy aimed at eliminating long-term employees in favor of private contractors. In an effort to oust the federal workforce and pursue the misguided agenda of contracting out civilian services, the Army has developed new physical and medical requirements that have little correlation with the ability of employees to perform their duties.

The Army's proposed changes, and the disciplinary steps it is undertaking, represent a serious national security threat. By removing career employees with intimate

knowledge of base functions and personnel and transferring their duties to contractors, the Army is jeopardizing its own safety. In instances of national crisis, such as during the 9/11 attacks, experienced security personnel were able to lock down Army facilities not through physical endurance or strength, but by utilizing their historical knowledge and interpersonal skills.

The policy also undercuts previous initiatives to provide returning veterans with an opportunity to transition into civilian life. More than 70 percent of the long-term security officers are former veterans with years of experience in protecting Army installations. Compare that to private contractors with lax hiring standards,



including reports of security contractors with felons on the payroll. Simply put, federalized security officers represent the best of the Army's civilian workforce.

To ensure that the workplace rights of these valued federal employees' are protected, AFGE has launched a nationwide grassroots campaign against this misguided policy. AFGE is working with local union leaders throughout the country to develop strategies to halt adverse disciplinary actions, narrow requirements to reflect actual duties performed on a frequent and recurring basis, and establish reasonable accommodations for security personnel unable to meet the new physical and medical requirements. ●

No Consistencies in **Interpreting Hatch Act**

AFGE President John Gage recently told lawmakers that there have been inconsistencies in interpretation of the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from participating in political activity while on the job. Speaking before the Senate Federal Workforce Subcommittee, Gage said firing an employee for a minor e-mail communication is an unreasonable penalty and the Hatch Act's policies regarding computer communications must be changed to reflect today's ever-changing workplace environment. He quoted from a recent Merit Systems Protection Board decision, in which an administrative law judge stated that a Hatch Act complaint based on minor e-mail violations "should never have been filed" because "nothing in the statute specifically prohibited" the worker's conduct. Confusion over what employees can and cannot do also often results in accidental violations. Gage urged Congress to increase its oversight to monitor Hatch Act prosecutions.

Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, said he wants to require the president to punish political appointees who violate the Hatch Act. Currently, if a political appointee is found to have violated the act, it's at the discretion of

the president to punish him or her. But it's easier for federal employees to get disciplined for violating the rules. The Office of Special Counsel is charged with investigating and enforcing the act, while the Merit Systems Protection Board decides whether to punish employees. ●

Announcing

Holiday Bonus Bucks!
November 26, 2007 through
February 29, 2008

Everyone is a Winner!

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. If you recruit five or more members, you will receive an AFGE briefcase-style navy canvas bag with leather trim—and your name will automatically be entered into a drawing for one of three laptop computers!*

Forms and information are on the AFGE web site: www.afge.org. Look for the Holiday Bonus Bucks under Featured Articles or call the Membership and Organization Department at 202-639-6410.

*photo simulation

AFGE's First Annual HISCO Conference is a Success

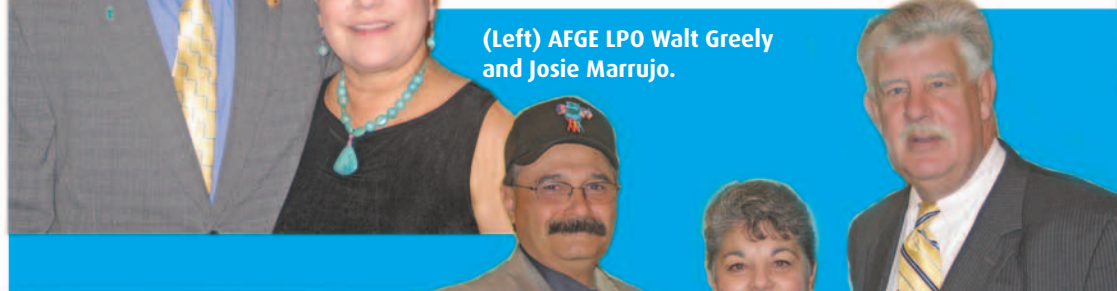
Dozens of activists attended AFGE's first annual Hispanic Coalition Conference this September in Albuquerque, N.M. The conference, which had the theme "Diversity... A Leadership Opportunity," dealt with myriad issues that impact the Hispanic union activists. Dr. Jose Almas, previous owner/editor of the popular Hispanic magazine, *Imagine*, was the keynote speaker.

The conference participants included AFGE National President John Gage, National Border Patrol Council President T.J. Bonner, General Counsel Mark Roth, Council 220 President Witold Skwierczynski and representatives from immigrant rights groups.

AFGE Local 4041 President Josie Marrujo, who also serves as secretary and treasurer for HISCO, says plans already are under way for next year's conference. "HISCO intends on broadening its agenda for 2008," says Marrujo, who says she hopes to work with AFGE's Women and Fair Practices departments to develop a comprehensive agenda that addresses the needs and issues of all minorities. ●



(Right) Conference attendees and HISCO Chair Joe Gonzales.



(Left) AFGE LPO Walt Greely and Josie Marrujo.



A mariachi band performing during the welcoming reception on the evening of Sept. 23.



(Above) Gonzales, Marrujo and AFGE President John Gage.



(Right) AFGE General Counsel Mark Roth and his wife, Patti, while attending the Sunday reception.



CIVILIAN DEFENSE WORKERS' UNION Files Lawsuit to Keep Fort Monmouth Open

Thousands of New Jersey Jobs at Stake

A FGE Local 1904 has filed suit to stop the closure of Fort Monmouth in New Jersey. Fort Monmouth was conditionally slated to be closed by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission at the recommendation of the Department of Defense (DoD), but AFGE says that measures used to evaluate the proposed base closure were illegal.

Local 1904 President John R. Poitras stated that "the Department of Defense violated the criteria of the 2005 BRAC Act. Additionally, the BRAC Commission asked twenty-two questions pertaining to potential closure of Fort Monmouth. Accurate answers supplied by Fort Monmouth were altered by DoD, which then supplied false answers to the BRAC Commission. DoD itself subsequently confirmed the accuracy of the original cost data submitted by Fort Monmouth."

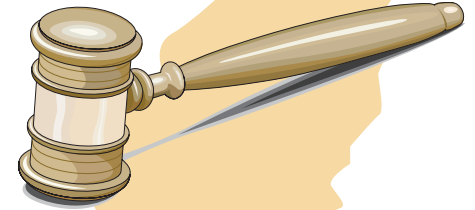
The 90-year-old base has a long history of research and technological

development, and is home to Team C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance), critical to the global war on terrorism.

"I hope the lawsuit brings attention to the flaws and deceit used by the Department of Defense in order to justify its misguided agenda. We are asking that the Court hold DoD accountable and enforce the statute that Congress enacted," Poitras continued.

Argument before the Federal District Court was scheduled for Oct. 25, 2007. AFGE also has asked U.S. District Court Judge Mary L. Cooper to stop the \$500 million construction contract at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland, which AFGE contends is not authorized by law at the present time.

The House Armed Services Committee—concerned by astronomical cost growth and allegations of DoD's deliberate disregard of, and failure to meet legal



criteria—will hold hearings in November to investigate the BRAC process, specifically in regard to Fort Monmouth.

"AFGE is proud of the part it has played in bringing these critical matters to the attention of the Congress," said Poitras. "We are doing a righteous thing for the men and women who serve our country, for the union and for the American taxpayer." ●

Be a Part of AFGE's 75th Anniversary Celebration!

AFGE is celebrating its 75th Anniversary and we want to hear from you. Be a part of history!

Write or email us a brief (two paragraph) summary about a unique or interesting experience you've had since becoming an AFGE member. Please include the year of the experience and a photo, if you have one. Your story and photo will be posted on a special web page AFGE is creating to commemorate our union's rich history.

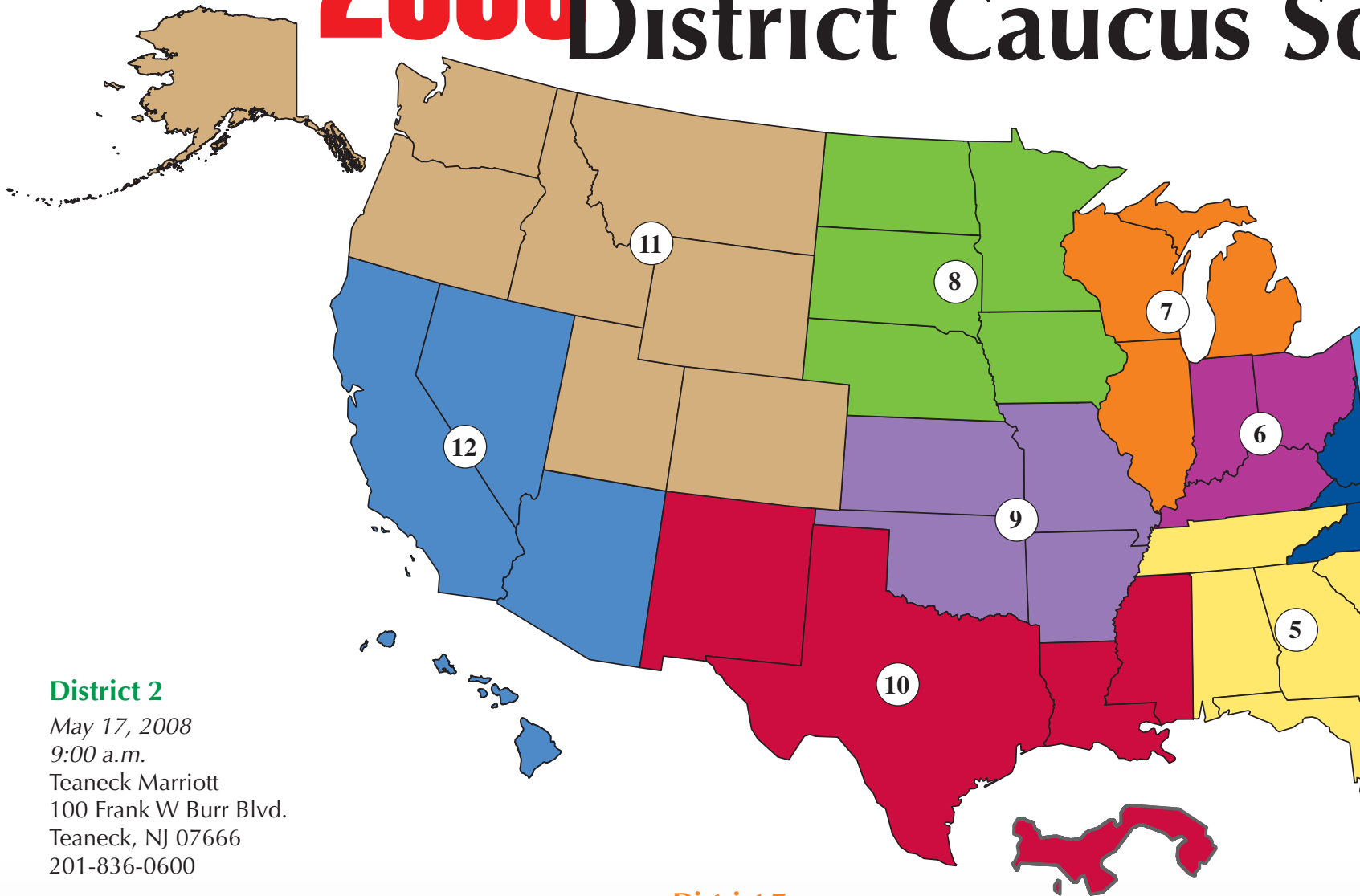


Send us your story via email at afge75@afge.org or mail your story to:

**AFGE History, Communications Department
80 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001**

Photos for return must include a self-addressed return envelope (no postage necessary).

2008 District Caucus Schedule



District 2

May 17, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Teaneck Marriott
100 Frank W Burr Blvd.
Teaneck, NJ 07666
201-836-0600

District 3

May 10, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Embassy Suites
Philadelphia Airport
9000 Bartram Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19153
215-365-4500

District 4

May 3, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Sheraton Baltimore City
Center Hotel
101 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-752-1100

District 5

May 19, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Columbia Marriott
1200 Hampton St.
Columbia, SC 29201
803-771-7000

District 6

May 14, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Sheraton City Center
31 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN
317-635-2000

District 7

May 17, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Hotel Bay Valley Resort
and Conference Center
2470 Old Bridge Road
Bay City, MI 48706
1-888-241-4653 or
989-686-3500

District 8

May 17, 2008
10:00 a.m.
Holiday Inn Sioux Falls-
City Center
100 West 8th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
605-339-2000

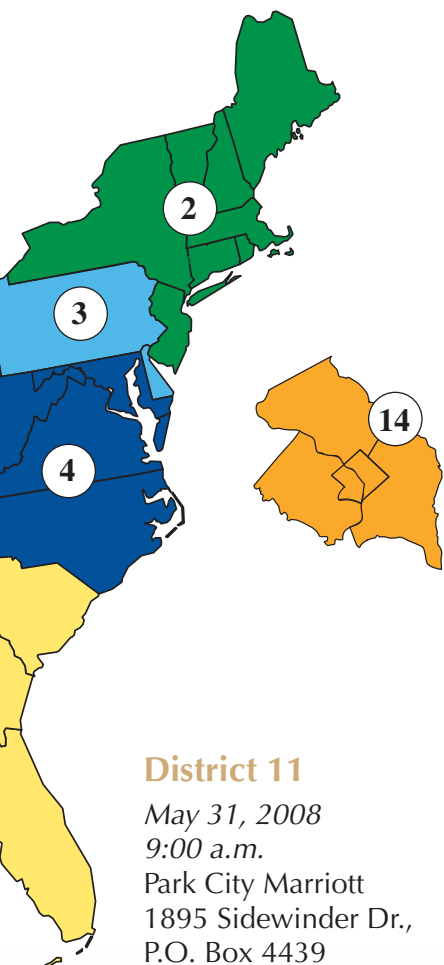
District 9

May 17, 2008
10:00 a.m.
Clarion Hotel
3333 South Glenstone
Springfield, MO 65804
417-883-6550
417-883-5720 Fax

District 10

May 3, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Sheraton Grand Hotel-DFW
4440 W John Carpenter Fwy
Irving, TX 75063
972-929-8400

Schedules



District 11

May 31, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Park City Marriott
1895 Sidewinder Dr.,
P.O. Box 4439
Park City, UT 84060
435-649-2900

District 12

May 17, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Hilton Anaheim
777 Convention Way
Anaheim, CA 92802
714-750-4321

District 14

May 17, 2008
9:00 a.m.
Holiday Inn
415 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-638-0707

2008 District Caucus Rules

The National Executive Council has approved these Rules to govern the 2008 District Caucus elections.

Rule 1. All National Vice Presidents, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinators, and National Women's Advisory Coordinators of the American Federation of Government Employees are to be nominated and elected in 2008 at a District Caucus to be held within each of the 12 Districts as set forth in Article V, Section 3 of the AFGE National Constitution, as amended, subsequent to April 30, and prior to June 1. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall place in *The Government Standard* a complete list of the Caucus Rules and the place, date, and time of each Caucus no later than the February issue of *The Government Standard*. The elected National Vice President, National Women's Advisory Coordinator, and National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator shall be installed prior to the adjourning of the Caucus.

Rule 2. The meeting place, exact time, and date of the Caucus shall be selected by the National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts no later than November 30 of the year preceding the election year. Written notices shall be mailed to each Local President and Treasurer within the District by the National Vice President, on or before March 1st of the election year. These notices shall specify: the requirements for election of local delegates; the exact time, date, complete address of the meeting place of the Caucus; the deadline and mail address for registration 30 days prior to the caucus; and exact hours of check-in.

Rule 3. Locals in good standing within each District may participate through the medium of a delegate(s). The membership of the local has the right to make the determination of participation in the Caucus after proper notification to the membership.

Each local is obliged by law to provide requisite notice to its members that a secret ballot election for delegate(s) will be held, even if the local's officers perceive that the membership does not wish to elect a delegate(s). A local's membership then, in accordance with law, may vote not to elect a delegate.

(a) The local membership has the right to determine the number of delegates to elect to the Caucus, within the above authorization. The local membership has the right to determine the number of delegates to fund to the Caucus, within the above authorization. A decision by a local to authorize funds for less than the full number of delegates elected does not preclude the remaining delegates

from participating, at their own expense, as delegates.

(b)(1) If a local is entitled to one delegate, the full voting strength is cast by that delegate.

(b)(2) In a situation where a local has elected its full complement of delegates, but not all delegates appear at the Caucus, those who are seated are entitled to a proportional share of the local's full entitlement of votes. If a local is entitled to more than one delegate, the voting strength is divided equally among those properly elected delegates participating in the caucus.

(b)(3) If a local is entitled to more than one delegate and the local has not elected its full complement, the local should conduct a delegate election to fill some or all of the remaining delegate slots. Or, the local may vote to not conduct a delegate election so only its already elected delegate(s), including ex officio delegates (by virtue of election to office), may participate in the caucus. In order for the delegate(s) to cast the full membership strength of the local, a notice of nomination must have been given and a local membership meeting held to allow the membership to decide to not hold a delegate election and to designate the delegate(s) to represent it at the caucus. If the local membership votes to have its delegate(s) cast its full complement of votes, a copy of the notice of nomination and a copy of the meeting minutes must accompany the delegate credential.

(c) A plurality of the valid votes cast is required for election of delegates, alternate delegates, and proxy delegates. If the number of delegate candidates exceeds the number of delegate positions to be filled, then the candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be elected as delegates, and the remaining candidates will be elected as alternate delegates unless otherwise stated in local bylaws.

(d) To be in good standing, a local shall have submitted all remittances through the month of February of the election year to the National Office.

(e) No local will be eligible to vote in the district caucus unless per capita tax is paid in full 60 days prior to the caucus.

Rule 4. (a) The number of Caucus delegates a local is entitled to is determined in the same manner as Convention delegates under Article VI, Sec. 2, of the AFGE National Constitution as follows: Locals having a membership of

(continued on page 8)

2008 District Caucus Rules (continued from page 7)

100 or less shall be entitled to one delegate; 101 to 200 members, two delegates; 201 to 300 members, three delegates; 301 to 400 members, four delegates; 401 to 500 members, five delegates; 501 to 750 members, six delegates; 751 to 1,000 members, seven delegates; 1,001 to 2,000 members, eight delegates; 2,001 and over, ten delegates; provided that any local whose charter has not been in existence for one year is entitled to representation at a District Caucus in accordance with the above, on the average of per capita tax paid monthly since its admission.

(b) Membership strength will be based on the average number of paid members for the previous 12-month period through December of the year preceding that year in which the Caucus is held.

Rule 5. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall furnish the National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts a list of locals in good standing in the respective District showing the number of delegate(s) and the number of votes each local is entitled to cast, along with a list of disqualified locals, with reasons for disqualification.

(a) Each local shall be notified by the National Secretary-Treasurer of its membership strength on or before February 1st of the election year. Each local shall be notified by the National Secretary-Treasurer of its standing.

(b) Locals in which an alleged criminal act has resulted in the local being delinquent in per capita tax will not be listed as delinquent as long as all conditions of an approved repayment agreement have been and continue to be met. This exemption will only apply if criminal charges have been filed with local, state, or federal law enforcement officials. In a situation where the repayment schedule extends beyond three years, the local shall be eligible to participate in the next Caucus, if otherwise eligible. This three-year period shall commence upon the date of the signed repayment agreement.

Rule 6. Delegates, alternate delegates, and proxy delegates to the Caucus must be elected by the local they represent. Officers of the locals, by virtue of their election to office, may serve as delegates, if prescribed by the applicable local constitutions. The election must be by secret ballot after at least 15 days notice to all members of the election date, such notices to be mailed to each member's last known home address. Nominations and elections may be held at the same time provided such notice is given.

Rule 7. The National Office shall furnish official credentials to the President of each local. When the delegate(s) to the Caucus have been elected, the local shall execute an official credential in triplicate. The Credential will show date, name of delegate, local number, complete address, type of local meeting, whether a delegate, alternate delegate, or proxy delegate and name, location, and number of the local if for a delegate or alternate delegate. It also shall contain certification that the delegate was elected by secret ballot in the local after 15 days notice, in accordance with AFGE election rules and procedures.

Delegates must be elected in accordance with the requirements of the Caucus Rules, AFGE's National Constitution, the local's Constitution and Bylaws, and the statutory requirements pertaining to union elections as interpreted by the Department of Labor.

(a) If the delegate is a proxy delegate, his/her credential must show the name, location, and number of the local being represented by the proxy.

(b) A separate set of credentials must be executed for each elected delegate, alternate delegate, or proxy delegate.

(c) The original of the credential must be forwarded to the National Vice President of the District holding the election for which the credential is issued, with a certified true copy of the notice of the meeting which was mailed to each member, and a copy of the minutes and/or tally sheet of the delegate election meeting. Delegates who serve by virtue of their election to local office must provide a copy of the approved local constitution provision guaranteeing such "automatic" delegate status, as well as the notices of nomination and election, and the official record (i.e., tally or minutes) of the officer election. In filling a vacancy without an election, only a person who is appointed from a position in which the person was a delegate by virtue of election to the office, or succeeds from a position in which the person was a delegate by virtue of election to the office, may be a delegate by virtue of the office in the new position. Credentials will not be acceptable unless accompanied by these documents.

(d) The duplicate copy must be issued to the delegate and must be presented at the Caucus. Delegates who fail to produce their duplicate credential may be certified by the Credentials Committee upon presentation of proper identification and certification of their delegate status from the Credentials Committee records.

(e) The triplicate copy of the credential must be retained by the local with a certified true copy of the notice of meeting which was mailed to each member, and a copy of the minutes and/or tally sheet of the delegate election meeting.

(f) All copies of credentials and required documents must be received by the NVP or postmarked at least 30 days prior to the Caucus, except in extraordinary circumstances, when the Caucus Credentials Committee may waive the 30 day period.

Rule 8. Locals within the District may be represented by a proxy delegate provided, however, that such a delegate is an elected delegate of his/her home local within that District and otherwise qualified in accordance with the AFGE National Constitution. The proxy delegate must be elected by secret ballot and by name. If only one proxy delegate is nominated, he or she will be elected by acclamation.

Rule 9. (a) The National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts shall assemble all credentials and supporting documents received in individual file folders in numerical order by local. He/she shall prepare a complete list of delegates by name and local number for which credentials are received.

(b) Prior to the convening of the Caucus, a Credentials Committee shall be selected by the National Vice President. A temporary Sergeant-at-Arms also will be selected by the National Vice President. The Credentials Committee shall consist of delegates and shall be composed of at least three members, and if a larger Committee is required, it shall contain an odd number of members, so that the Committee can decide by majority vote any credentials questions presented to it, thus avoiding the possibility of tie votes of the Committee. The Committee shall be representative of the District, considering the location and composition of members and the geographical areas of the District.

In order for a candidate to have a representative on the Credentials Committee, the individual must notify in writing the National Vice President of the District holding the election of his/her candidacy at least 48 hours prior to the Caucus date.

(c) The National Vice President shall deliver to the Credentials Committee:

(1) The file of all credentials and supporting documents received, arranged in individual file folders in numerical order by local number.

(2) The completed list of delegates.

(3) A list of locals in good standing showing the number of delegates and the number of votes each local is entitled to cast.

(4) A list of all locals that are ineligible because of arrearages in submitting per capita taxes or other indebtedness.

Rule 10. There shall be an Election Committee consisting of delegates and composed of at least three members, and if a larger Committee is required, it shall contain an odd number of members. The members of the Election Committee shall be selected in the following manner: upon the convening of the Caucus, the Caucus will elect by majority vote a Chairperson, who will serve as Chairperson of the Election Committee. Each candidate will select one person to serve on the Election Committee. Any further members of the Election Committee shall be elected by majority vote of the Caucus.

The Caucus Chairperson will receive from the National Secretary-Treasurer a sealed election kit containing sufficient ballots, tally sheets, and charts for the names of the candidates and letter symbols for at least three ballots.

In the alternative, at the discretion of the National Vice President, the District may employ an independent organization to conduct the election under the direction of the Caucus Chairperson and the Election Committee. Furthermore, at the discretion of the National Vice President, the District may conduct the election by electronic means (other than “touch screen voting”) or secure and electronic option(s), with the prior approval of the National President.

If printed and issued by the National Secretary-Treasurer, the ballots will be issued in denominations of 500, 100, 50, 25, 10, 5, and 1 votes, and each denomination shall be of a different color. The candidates will determine their position on the ballot by drawing lots. The names of the nominees will be placed on the chart at the front of the Caucus room and designated alphabetically, according to the draw (A, B, C), large enough to be clearly read.

If printed at the Caucus by an independent election organization, the ballots will be issued in denominations of 500, 100, 10, and 1 votes (or multiples thereof), and each denomination shall be of a different color. Names of candidates shall appear on the ballot in the order determined by the draw.

A Voting Authorization (V-2) Form will be made available to a delegate who wishes to designate another delegate from the same local to cast his or her votes. The delegates then will vote their individual ballot as follows:

(a) When one or more of the delegates elected by a local is not certified by the Credentials Committee, the total voting strength of the local shall be proportionately divided among those delegates who do receive credentials. When a local has failed to provide the membership an opportunity, with proper notice, to elect up to the local’s full complement of delegates, the voting strength of the local shall be reduced proportionately. The failure of a delegate to vote, after being certified by the Credentials Committee, does not allow distribution of that delegate’s votes among his local’s remaining delegates, unless a properly executed V-2 Form has been given those delegates.

(b) The Election Committee will issue ballots in appropriate amount to delegates on presentation of properly authenticated credentials, immediately prior to the delegates entering the voting booth.

(c) The Union must provide a voting booth or enclosure where members can mark their ballots in complete privacy to assure secrecy of their vote.

(d) Marked ballots should be placed immediately in a sealed container by the voter, not to be opened until the votes are tabulated.

(e) After the tabulations of all votes, the results must be read, posted, or written on a board clearly stating the number of votes received by each candidate.

(f) Where there are more than two candidates for the office of National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women’s Advisory Coordinator, and no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes.

(g) When only one candidate is nominated for an office to be filled, the Chairperson of the Election Committee shall cast an unanimous ballot for that candidate.

(h) The Caucus Election Committee must certify the eligibility of all candidates.

All records of the Caucus must be certified as complete and accurate by the Caucus Election Committee Chairperson and packaged, sealed, and forwarded to the National Secretary-Treasurer. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall retain the records for one year, or until any protest is resolved and applicable time frames for appeal have elapsed, whichever of these is later.

Rule 11.¹ The Caucus Election Committee shall receive and resolve, by majority vote, any protest or challenge to the manner in which the election for National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women’s Advisory Coordinator is conducted, including the eligibility of delegates and the qualification of candidates.

A Caucus Election Committee only may entertain an election complaint which has been delivered or postmarked to that Committee, or any of its members, prior to, during, or within five calendar days after the adjournment of the Caucus.

In any protest the Election Committee will determine whether the protest was timely, whether the alleged misconduct occurred, whether the misconduct was a violation, and whether the violation could have affected the outcome of the election. Only if the outcome could have been affected will the election be rerun. Any appeal from the decision by the Election Committee shall be submitted to the National President, pursuant to Appendix A, Part III of the AFGE National Constitution.

Rule 12. In order for a candidate to be elected as a District National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women’s Advisory Coordinator, a candidate must (a) meet the following qualifications: be a member in good standing; been a governmental employee for three consecutive years; been a member in good standing of the Federation for the three consecutive years immediately prior to the date of nomination for the office being sought; not be a member in any labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO; and (b) receive a majority of the valid votes cast.

Rule 13. Councils shall not be permitted to send delegate(s) to the Caucus.

Rule 14. Full-time National Representatives and full-time paid employees of AFGE shall not be permitted to attend the Caucus as delegates, per Article VIII, Section 2(d), of the AFGE National Constitution.

Rule 15. Any local wishing to merge with a local in another District must have all steps outlined in the *NEC Policy on Multi-District Locals* finalized and approved by the NEC no later than December 31 of the year previous to the Caucus year, for purposes of voting at the appropriate District Caucus. (Copies of the *NEC Policy on Multi-District Locals* are available from the National Secretary-Treasurer.)

¹ For District 14 only, election protests must be filed directly to: Ms. Molly Harkin, U.S. Department of Labor Election Supervisor, 800 N. Capitol St., N.W., Suite 120, Washington, D.C. 20002, as soon as possible but no later than 10 days after the election. Pursuant to a stipulation of settlement with the U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL), the 14th District caucus elections are to be supervised by DOL.

WOMEN AND FAIR PRACTICES to Launch **Disabled Workers Initiative** for Federal Workers

In an effort to deal with the problems faced by disabled government workers, AFGE's Women's and Fair Practices departments soon will launch a multi-faceted campaign to promote awareness and enforcement of laws aimed at protecting the disabled in the government. This launch follows a meeting of AFGE activists, many of whom are disabled, sponsored by the departments this summer.

Meeting participants identified failing government practices at every level in the treatment of disabled workers. "It is AFGE's intent, with the help of the members, to right these wrongs," said Andrea Brooks, NVP/Women's and Fair Practices departments. "This initiative initially will focus on raising awareness among leaders to educate the agencies regarding their responsibilities."

According to AFGE, agencies are non-compliant on many levels. Often, disabled

individuals are hired to meet agency quotas, but those agencies refuse to provide the necessary accommodations needed for those employees to work or to be successful in their positions.

"Agency negligence has had a devastating impact on disabled employees, often resulting in a loss of self esteem and employee morale, and ultimate forfeit of job security."

"When disabled workers vocalize their needs, agencies often delay or even deny their requests, claiming it lacks the funding to consider such request," said Brooks. "Agency negligence has had a devastating impact on disabled employees, often resulting in a loss of self esteem and employee morale, and ultimate forfeiture of job security."

Women's and Fair Practices departments are currently evaluating treatment

of disabled federal workers in terms of promotions and awards.

If you would like to help in this initiative, contact your District Women's and Fair Practices Coordinator, National Vice

President, or email the Women's and Fair Practices departments' Program Specialist, Caniesha Washington at washic@afge.org.

The official campaign launch is scheduled to coincide with AFGE's Legislative Conference in February 2008. At the Conference, the Women's and Fair Practices Departments will sponsor a Disability Rights Panel at its Worker Rights Caucus. Plan to be there! For more information go to <http://wfp.afge.org>. ●

GCO Partners With Tully, Rinckey in Butterbaugh Claims

Move will allow for additional new cases to be filed

AFGE's Office of General Counsel has partnered with Tully, Rinckey & Associates—a premier military reservist law firm—that will preside as co-counsel in military leave Butterbaugh cases.

In 2003, AFGE won the decision in *Butterbaugh v. Department of Justice*, which provides relief to reservists who were charged military leave on non-workdays. Thousands of federal employees who were improperly charged military leave now have the opportunity to be compensated.

Partnering with Tully, Rinckey will not only help to expedite existing cases, it also will allow AFGE to take on new claims.

Tully, Rinckey has achieved great success in its representation of military reservists. The firm has a dedicated staff that focuses on military leave Butterbaugh cases, and specialization claims will be processed quickly and with minimal effort from litigants. Tully, Rinckey intends to process all of the cases currently with AFGE within one year. For more information, go to www.afge.org. ●

Every Member Counts!

Thanks to the efforts of dedicated and passionate individuals, AFGE continues to bring in new members. AFGE Local 1629, which represents Department of Veteran Affairs employees, is one example. This year alone, through what its local president calls "constant mobilization," the local has been able to sign up 183 new members.

"Local 1629 set out to meet the challenges set forth by National President John Gage head on," said Local President Jeffrey Cunningham. "We organized aggressively and people are able to see our passion for AFGE." ●





BILL FLETCHER JR.

New AFGE Director of Field Services and Education

AFGE recently announced veteran labor advocate Bill Fletcher Jr. as the new director of its Field Services and Education Department. Fletcher joins AFGE after serving as the Belle Zeller Visiting Professor at Brooklyn College-City University of New York, as well as president and CEO of TransAfrica Forum from 2002–2006.

In his new post, Fletcher will add to his legacy of promoting education and organizing in the labor movement, which began as a rank-and-file member of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America in Quincy, Mass. While in the Boston area, Fletcher also was involved in efforts to desegregate the building trades.

More recently, Fletcher served as vice-president for International Trade Union Development Programs for the George

Meany Center of the AFL-CIO, where he worked with foreign labor centers and domestic unions on matters of organizational change and development. Prior to his work at the Meany Center, Fletcher worked as education director and later assistant to the president of the AFL-CIO. Fletcher's union experience also includes work with the Service Employees International Union, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and the United Auto Workers union.

Fletcher received his undergraduate education at Harvard University and his Masters from Brooklyn College-City University of New York. His work has been published in a variety of books, newspapers, and magazines. He also is the co-author of the pictorial booklet: "The Indispensable Ally: Black Workers and the Formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, 1934–1941." ●

AFGE Offers **New Hotline** For Union Homeowners Facing Mortgage Problems

Save My Home Hotline Provides Information and Advice

Responding to the urgent need for mortgage education and advice in a turbulent market, AFGE and Union Plus are launching a homeowner education program that includes a Save My Home hotline to help members facing mortgage payment problems.

A new national survey reveals that half of homeowners with Adjustable Rate Mortgages admit they have no idea how their ARMs reset, and nearly three-quarters do not know how much their monthly mortgage payments will increase when they do.

The survey, conducted Sept. 13-25 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for Union Privilege, reveals that ARM holders generally are not concerned about mortgage payments until their rates reset. Then anxiety sets in as they realize their payments have risen substantially. Some 2.5 million homeowners will face the shock of higher payments when their ARMs reset before the end of the year.

"Our poll shows that consumers are looking for government help, which the labor movement is not waiting for," AFGE National President John Gage said. "We're reaching out to union families to make sure they don't fall through the cracks."

AFGE and Union Plus are stepping up with several initiatives to help homeowners and prospective homebuyers understand mortgages and how to take steps to protect themselves from foreclosure and financial ruin.

The Union Plus Save My Home hotline (1-866-490-5361) will provide free, confidential advice from HUD-certified housing counselors. In-person counseling is available at more than 100 local offices in 22 states and the District of Columbia. ●



SAVE THE DATE

AFGE's ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

February 10 – 13, 2008 • Hyatt Regency Hotel

Check AFGE's web site, www.afge.org

Look for more information on the 75th Anniversary Celebration, Sunday, February 10th!

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AFGE Fights to Protect Hundreds of Jobs at Sheppard Air Force Base

At Sheppard Air Force Base, more than 500 employees—70% of whom are military veterans—are at risk of losing their jobs and benefits as a result of a contracting out scheme aimed at eliminating jobs in public works and civil engineering services. The Air Force claims it is a cost saving measure, but savings have been seriously overstated and the loss of jobs would have a crippling impact on the community, said AFGE.

The Air Force began the A-76 privatization review back in 1999. It hired a high-priced private contractor to assist in conducting that first A-76 review and devoted thousands of military and civilian work hours to the effort. The study continued until December 2001, when the Air Force cancelled it and all other A-76 reviews because of conflict of interest concerns across the Air Force A-76 program.

At that time, the Air Force could have met the stated goals by (1) using the information gathered during two years of study to increase efficiency, and (2) converting the military positions to civilian positions to free up military personnel for war-fighting functions.

Instead, the Air Force chose to shelve all of the information gathered during those two years, and in essence throw away all of the taxpayer dollars spent in that effort. The real, and political, goal of the A-76 review had become obvious: to give private contractors a shot at bidding on this work.

The Air Force ran through its projected savings of 20–50 percent by grossly undervaluing job functions performed by federal employees and failing to include the cost of conducting the contracting out study. To date, the review process has cost the

base more than \$5 million in staff time and consulting fees. However, the Air Force still has not included these fees in any estimates. In addition to the cost, the contracting out review is a violation of federal law.

The federal statute governing contracting out reviews, known as A-76 studies, requires that the review be enacted in a 30-month time frame. The study at Sheppard AFB has been going on for 8½ years. As a result of the undue hardship, employee morale has been devastated and workplace uncertainty is high. Depleted staff levels have increased the burden on military personnel, leaving war-fighters under-supported. Despite the Air Force's enduring efforts, AFGE has continued to fight for these valuable employees, calling on Congress to end the costly and misguided contracting out study. ●