



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

Special Edition

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July 2008

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

IT'S OUR TURN 2008:

Your **Vote**, Your **Participation** Have **Never** Been **More Important**



What's At Stake

Never before have your vote and participation in the election process been so critical. As a federal employee, and more importantly as a citizen of the United States, your job and service to the American public are at stake.

AFGE has endorsed Senator Barack Obama, D-Ill., for president because he promises to lead this country in providing high quality public service. For too long, the landscape has been painted by those who feel that public service is a wasteful, costly business. For too many years, lawmakers supported President Bush's agenda, which has crippled the government's ability to provide high quality, critical services to Americans.

Last year the Democrats took control of the House and Senate, which improved our situation tremendously. By working

WALK KNOCK TALK '08

of Homeland Security and Defense whose pay raises have been put in jeopardy by the new personnel system authorities in those agencies. Ensuring that these federal employees receive the same salary adjustments as General Schedule employees outside DoD and DHS is a top AFGE priority.

At the same time, we urge Congress to uphold enforcement of the existing laws pertaining to both the General Schedule and the Federal Wage System.

with Democratic committee chairmen, our provisions to help federal employees went into the base of numerous original bills. However, the margin is far too narrow in the Senate—it almost impossible to get anything through without 60 votes. We need to get stronger pro-union majorities in the House and Senate, and we need to get the White House back. AFGE members must volunteer and vote in order to make sure this happens.

Both are statutory systems based upon the principle of comparability with the private sector. That is, whether it is the prevailing rate system for blue collar workers or the locality and ECI system for white collar workers, federal pay is supposed to reflect the wages and salaries paid by private employers. This is what makes the federal pay system "market-based" and allows federal agencies to compete effectively, and staff federal agencies and programs with qualified personnel.

Your Pay—

In the last four years AFGE activists have fought for and won another form of "pay raise parity" i.e. guaranteed pay increases for blue collar federal employees in the Federal Wage System (FWS), as well as all employees in the departments

Yet at every opportunity since President Bush took office in 2001, this administration has sought to reduce the pay raise that bipartisan majorities in the Congress have passed in support of both pay

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IT'S OUR TURN 2008 (continued from page 1)

comparability with the private sector, and pay raise parity between civilian and military employees. It also has sought to deviate from the practice of general pay increases that cover the entire federal workforce.

Your Job Contracting Out/ Privatization

It is no secret that the current administration is at war with middle class and working America—the very people who make up federal civil service. The Bush administration's privatization scheme has been all about replacing federal employees with contractors, not making federal services more efficient. Take for example the debacle at Walter Reed. In 2007, *The Washington Post* reported that the "scandal over treatment of outpatients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center has focused attention on the Army's decision to privatize the facilities support workforce at the hospital, a move commanders say left the building maintenance staff undermanned." OMB still is forcing agencies to use privatization quotas and to use a completely biased, pro-contractor A-76 process. OMB continues to justify its unprecedented wholesale privatization



The AFGE NEC has endorsed Senator Barack Obama for president.

effort with unsubstantiated savings claims. Only by fighting back against this effort to eliminate federal jobs, AFGE has managed to improve the administration's contracting out process—by ensuring that contractors are forced to compete before our members lose their jobs, that contractors don't get an advantage from offering no benefits or lower benefits to their workers, and by creating an appeals process for federal employees when their jobs are contracted out unfairly. A more favorable administration for federal employees will put AFGE in a stronger position for protecting our jobs—as well as the interests of taxpayers.

Your Health Care Benefits—FEHBP

Under the Bush administration, premiums and co-pays for plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) have increased dramatically. As a result, more and more full-time federal employees are in danger of not being able to afford health insurance. We need an administration with an aggressive agenda to rein in the greed of health insurance companies—by ensuring that OPM engages in serious negotiations for benefits and premiums with health plans. Just as important, a more favorable administration will fight for universal

health insurance for all Americans—so that all of us can be healthier.

Your Rights—

Since the tragedies of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration has taken every opportunity to advocate for a profound erosion of the civil service protections and collective bargaining rights of federal employees. And at every turn, AFGE has been at forefront of the fight to protect federal employees' workplace rights. The recent victory of AFGE and its allies over DoD's misguided NSPS shows just how strong we are when we mobilize together.

While we know that we will not be facing President Bush after this election season, it is important to remember that his congressional enablers, including Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., represent a continuation of the policies of his administration. The attacks on employees in DHS and DoD have been somewhat beaten back through a combination of legal victories in the court and legislative reforms in the last year and a half. But employees at the Transportation Security Administration continue to suffer with no meaningful voice in the workplace, and only a more favorable administration can guarantee an improvement in their rights and stop the attacks on employees in other agencies.

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WHAT'S AT STAKE IN 2008:

A Special Message from AFGE President John Gage

Look where we've been and where we are; then look at where we can be.

The last eight years: Iraq, Katrina, scandals, health care- mortgage- education crises, wages down, good jobs disappearing, CEO salaries, oil prices, oil company profits through the roof. Billions in tax-supported profits to private contractors, HMO's and drug companies. Political hacks put in charge to run critical programs into the ground. Programs that were created for and have stood by working families like Social Security, Medicare, VA, mine and food inspection, FEMA, HUD. As Senator Obama succinctly says, "You don't put someone in charge of the Department of Labor, who doesn't believe in Labor!"

By taking part in the election process—through our vote—through our dollars and through our volunteer efforts:

- We CAN give our nation's veterans quality health care.
- We CAN stop the needless, costly privatization studies and contracting out.

- We CAN provide more "people power" to protect our borders.
- We CAN set full administrative funding for our Social Security Administration.
- We CAN provide full funding to the Bureau of Prisons.
- We CAN ensure the rights of Americans to fair treatment by their employers.

AFGE has endorsed Senator Barack Obama because he has solid, well-developed plans for health care, education, good government, and strong infrastructure. He brings an optimism that we can grow our economy while making it fair with more opportunities for American workers. He stands by hard-working Americans. And I know, from my own experience, that he's a good guy with a wonderful wife and great kids.

— John Gage



Senator Barack Obama and AFGE National President John Gage

AFGE TAKES LEAD IN VOTER PROTECTION CAMPAIGN

Union Feels Voter Protection Will Play Large Role in Election Outcome

With a record number of Americans now registered to vote, AFGE has taken the lead of a voter protection campaign with Andrea E. Brooks, national vice president of Women's and Fair Practices, as the coordinator. "The great decision facing our nation must be determined by the voters," said NVP Brooks. The objective of the voter protection campaign is to have the nation's citizens successfully get to the polls and cast ballots in this year's presidential election. AFGE is targeting many demographics and producing radio and print ads that will be launched nationwide. AFGE also has launched student-oriented MySpace (www.myspace.com/afgevoterprotection) and Facebook ("Voter Protection") pages that will enlighten America's young voters of their rights and responsibilities as voters. For more information about voter protection go to www.afge.org.

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