

How To Defend Your Jobs From Congressional Cutbacks: *An AFGE Lobbying Guide*

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

March 1, 1995

Dear AFGE Leader:

The new Republican Congress and its proposals in the “Contract With America” pose a significant threat to the job security of many federal employees. The Republican agenda is **not the reinvention of government** to benefit America’s taxpayers which we have supported, **but rather the dismantling of government** which we oppose. We must not delude ourselves about what this political transformation means for federal employees. Threats of drastic workforce reductions or the elimination of agencies are real, and they must be taken seriously.

We can no longer approach powerful Democratic chairpersons and ask them to craft legislation that will protect the legitimate interests of federal employees and their families. Under the new Congress, Democrats lack the power to prevent major layoffs in the federal workforce, even if they prove to be so inclined. And it is not clear that the President will use his veto pen to prevent such legislation from being enacted; in fact, the Administration, as part of a misguided reaction to the Republican Congressional takeover, has proposed many dubious reduction proposals of its own.

Clearly, the political climate has changed dramatically since last November. And we must change, too, if federal employees are not to be used for short-term political gain. Therefore, **AFGE members must take it upon themselves to be the primary defenders of their jobs**. This important work can no longer be done by a handful of highly-skilled and highly-motivated professionals in the National Office. Representatives and Senators must hear from the vast multitude of AFGE members who help to elect them and, if need be, defeat them. As part of that effort, we must grow our grassroots political action committees.

Of course, we will continue to aggressively make the case for federal employees here in Washington, D.C. But we will also work with the membership to make the case back home by supplying activists with tools and strategies, like *HOW TO SAVE YOUR RETIREMENT: AN AFGE LOBBYING GUIDE*, the attached *HOW TO DEFEND YOUR JOBS FROM CONGRESSIONAL CUTBACKS: AN AFGE LOBBYING GUIDE*, and the upcoming *HOW TO PREVENT YOUR JOBS FROM BEING CONTRACTED OUT: AN AFGE LOBBYING GUIDE*.

In order to retain our credibility in the upcoming battle over the role of the federal government in American life, we will have to recognize that while most government programs provide vital services in exemplary fashion, some need improvement, and others simply don’t work. We must be prepared to argue the differences, offer solutions, and let the taxpayers know how their money can be saved and services improved; and yes, we must help Members of Congress to distinguish between programs that work and those that no longer provide the American people with comprehensive services.

We will not save the job of every federal employee. But if we fail to participate responsibly in this process, many more federal employees will lose their jobs. Of course, we will fight to minimize layoffs. If layoffs become inevitable, we will insist that the government provide a smooth transition—including priority placement programs and job retraining, with pay and health care—to those federal employees who are separated not for failure to satisfactorily perform their assignments, but for no other reason than the political winds of fortune have changed direction.

Some will point to partnership critically as the cause of our problems. That merely creates a scapegoat for the inevitable: government was going to change and the process could have gone forward without us. But, with partnership in place, we can fight for a seat at the conference table and help to determine how government will be changed.

This *AFGE LOBBYING GUIDE* is intended to help you and your members to lobby aggressively on your own behalf. If there is one area where we haven’t always realized our potential, I’d have to say it’s that we don’t appreciate our own ability to influence Members of Congress. After all, we are the largest federal employee

union in the nation, and numbers count. Our members understand government. We know how programs work—and when they don't work, we know why—better than even the most esteemed journalists, policy analysts, or politicians. Our members also represent a diverse cross-section of America and possess a wealth of experiences. In our vast membership, we have women and men; old and young; blue collar and white collar; Republicans and Democrats; liberals and conservatives; and Northerners, Southerners, Easterners, and Westerners. And finally, let us never forget that we are taxpayers, constituents, and above all, patriotic Americans. Quite simply, we can command any politician's attention, we can talk any politician's language, and we can appeal to any politician's interest.

The only question is how effectively our membership will use this enormous potential. I believe that *HOW TO DEFEND YOUR JOBS FROM CONGRESSIONAL CUTBACKS: AN AFGE LOBBYING GUIDE* will provide us with the plan of action we need to combat the unnecessary, ill-conceived, and even downright mean-spirited workforce reductions that Congress will undoubtedly be considering over the next two years.

This guide is not light reading, but then the work that needs to be done is not easy. The experts would say, in the age of remote controls and split-second attention spans, that providing AFGE leaders like yourself with sufficient detail to actually do that important work is foolhardy because you're not up to the job. I say they're wrong. What do you say?

Please contact AFGE's Legislative Department at (202) 639-6413 if you have any questions about the guide, or how it can be improved.

Sincerely and in Solidarity,

John N. Sturdivant
National President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. RISK ASSESSMENT (page 1)

In consultation with members, especially those on the Legislative Committee, you, as the Local's leader, need to make a determination as to whether the worksite or—times being what they are—perhaps even the entire agency is vulnerable to elimination or significant downsizing. Six questions that may help to focus the determination-making process are listed on page 1.

In making a determination, you should rely on a variety of informational resources, including: 1) the District's National Vice President; 2) the Council to which the Local belongs, if applicable; 3) the National Office; 4) the news media; 5) the worksite's customers and suppliers; and 6) agency management.

You should err on the side of caution in making a determination as to whether the Local is vulnerable. If you're not sure, assume it's vulnerable.

II. INFORMATION COLLECTION (pages 2-4)

Once you've determined that the agency or worksite is vulnerable to attack, immediately begin to assemble the information necessary to defend your agency's work. This information will be used to craft the message of the Local's collective legislative action: **THE LOCAL'S JOBS SHOULD BE SAVED**. You should begin to collect reports, studies, budgets, or any other documents, whether or not produced by the federal government, which can be used to show that the agency or worksite is satisfactorily performing a vital service. At the same time, also begin gathering information about the consequences workforce reductions would have on federal employees, customers and the delivery of service. Finally, you should be prepared to show the Local's past and present efforts to reinvent and improve the service delivery process.

Simultaneously, you should also begin constructing an information network of contacts that will keep your Local informed about possible workforce reductions affecting the agency or worksite. Such contacts should include: 1) the District's National Vice President; 2) the AFGE Council to which the Local belongs, if applicable; 3) the AFGE Legislative Department; 4) reporters for area newspapers; 5) agency management, including any applicable partnership council; 6) the worksite's customers and suppliers; 7) area AFL-CIO Locals; 8) other AFGE Locals from the same agency; 9) Members of Congress and their staffs; and 10) area government officials, prominent businesspersons, and public interest groups. Most of these contacts will become part of your lobbying network.

The last two sets of contacts deserve special mention. All Members of Congress in the area should be contacted—no matter how unfriendly they appear to be towards the federal government. Tell the Members' aides of the Local's message, emphasizing the impact that workforce reductions would have on the communities in the Local's area. Also emphasize that the worksite performs a vital service in an effective and efficient manner. How have ordinary Americans been helped by the service provided by the Local's members? If the Local has produced cost-savings or improvements in quality or customer service through the partnership process, highlight these achievements. This will enhance the Local's credibility and perhaps change the mind of a Member of Congress who is unfamiliar with the positive role a union like AFGE can play in the federal workplace. Seek public commitments from the Local's Members of Congress—including press releases, photo opportunities, or even worksite visits—for the continued existence of your worksite or agency.

Area powerbrokers—including government officials and prominent businesspersons—have a significant stake in keeping the Local's members employed. The salaries or wages earned by the Local's members keep government treasuries full and businesses in the black. It's often quite easy to win the support of area powerbrokers. Ultimately, bankers, county executives, and the like care little about ideology; the economic health of the area is always their paramount concern. Such area powerbrokers are also likely to have relationships with Members of Congress. Finally, look to these powerbrokers to supply dramatic information about what job losses would mean to the area.

III. COLLECTIVE LEGISLATIVE ACTION (pages 5-15)

Select the themes that will help to focus the Local's message. Eleven such themes are listed on pages 5-6.

Next, you should develop a Fact Sheet that will give the Local's members a quick, concise summary of the threat facing their agency or worksite and the arguments they will need when lobbying to save their jobs. The Fact Sheet can also be used to acquaint journalists and Members of Congress with the Local's situation.

Tips on how a Fact Sheet should be organized are provided on pages 7-8. See APPENDIX I for an outline of a Fact Sheet.

After completing a Fact Sheet, it's time to create the tools members can use to undertake collective legislative action. Not all of the members will have the time, interest, or skill to engage in political participation unless you make it easy by telling them the message they need to send to the area's Members of Congress and the various ways that message can be sent, including telephone calls and letters.

Several suggestions for how to make it easy for the Local's members to call their Representatives and Senators are provided on page 9. A sample telephone script is included on pages 9-10. The more telephone calls that are made on behalf of the Local, the more influence the Local will have over Members of Congress. Therefore, after all of the Local's members have made their calls, you should assist employees at the worksite who do not belong to AFGE as well as the area powerbrokers who are part of the Local's network to make their own calls to Members of Congress.

It's important for the Local's members to follow up on their telephone calls with letters to their Representatives and Senators. While most Members of Congress pay attention to telephone messages, it's letters that really cause them to sit up and take notice. According to their reasoning, making a telephone call is relatively easy; but sitting down and actually writing a letter takes more time and thus shows a greater commitment from the constituent to the issue. Also note that Members of Congress are more influenced by a barrage of correspondence if the letters are personalized. While a Member is still impressed that a constituent took the time to write her a letter, even if she knows that it was copied from a master letter, she'd be even more impressed if that constituent had taken the time to write his own letter. Therefore, it would be best if the Local's members use the facts and arguments from the Local's Fact Sheet, but express them in their own words. See page 11 for tips on organizing a letter-writing campaign. Sample letters to Members of Congress are provided in APPENDIX II and APPENDIX III.

After the Local's members and other members of the network have sent individual letters to Members of Congress in defense of the Local's jobs, it's time to combine forces and write a letter on behalf of the entire network, signed by all of its members, especially well-recognized area powerbrokers. Tips on how to write a network letter are included on page 12. A sample network letter is provided in APPENDIX IV.

All of that collective legislative action should get meetings for the Local's members with area Representatives and Senators, even those who may have played hard-to-get earlier. Tips for scheduling and preparing for meetings with Members of Congress are provided on pages 13-14. The object of the meetings should be to get commitments to help. If the Member of Congress expresses support for the Local's jobs, don't take "Yes" for an answer. Ask her what she'll do to help the agency or worksite besides merely casting the correct vote. Will she lobby her colleagues on the Local's behalf? Will she introduce any necessary legislation or amendments? Will she use her media contacts? What advice does she have for expanding the Local's collective legislative activity? Will she use her influence to get other Members of Congress to meet with the Local's members?

While every Local will be able to target at least three Members of Congress—two Senators from the state and one Representative from the area—some legislators are more valuable allies than others. For your purposes, the most valuable Members of Congress are those who sit on the Appropriations and Authorization Committees for the Local's agency. See page 15 for a discussion of what to do if none of the Members of Congress from the Local's area hold seats on those two important Committees.

I. RISK ASSESSMENT

A. DETERMINATION OF THE LOCAL'S VULNERABILITY

In consultation with the members, make a determination as to whether the worksite or—times being what they are—perhaps even the entire agency is vulnerable to elimination or significant downsizing. Spend some time carefully answering the following questions:

1. Can the service performed at the worksite be eliminated? Has demand for the service declined? Is the service provided no longer unique?
2. Can the worksite be closed, and its responsibilities transferred to another worksite? (As we know, such consolidations can often result in significant job losses.)
3. Can the service performed at the worksite be contracted out or privatized?
4. Has there been discussion about radically changing the service delivery process in a way that would result in drastic workforce reductions? Going from direct service to vouchers would be an example of such a radical change.
5. Can that service be handed down to state or local governments?
6. Are customers who use the service politically powerful? If so, would at least some customers offer resistance if an attempt was made to eliminate the service provided by the agency? Or is it that customers are demanding that the service somehow be performed differently?

B. INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES NECESSARY TO MAKE THAT DETERMINATION

In making the determination as to whether the worksite or agency is vulnerable, rely on a variety of informational resources:

1. The AFGE National Vice President for the District;
2. The AFGE Council to which the Local belongs, if applicable;
3. The AFGE National Office, including several valuable publications like the Legislative Dateline, the AFGE Bulletin, and the AFGE Government Standard;
4. Articles and broadcasts from area and national media outlets discussing the agency or worksite;
5. The worksite's customers and suppliers, i.e., the people and businesses that depend upon the service provided by the worksite and those people and businesses that help the worksite to perform its work;
6. Agency management, both in the field and back in Washington, DC.

Suggestion 1: USE THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TO GAIN MORE INFORMATION

If you have negotiated a partnership agreement with your agency, insist that management share all available information on proposals for workforce reductions—whether those initiatives come from the Administration or Congress—and on the consequences implementation of those proposals would have for federal employees who work at the agency, the ability of the agency to perform its service, and the agency's customers.

Suggestion 2: ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION IN MAKING A DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER THE LOCAL IS VULNERABLE

In making a determination as to whether the agency or worksite is vulnerable, err on the side of caution. Because we are now in an era in which the dominant ideology sees little if any role for government, all federal employees should give very serious thought to job security. If you're not sure, assume the Local is vulnerable.

II. INFORMATION COLLECTION

A. CRAFT THE MESSAGE: THE LOCAL'S JOBS SHOULD BE SAVED

If a determination is made that the agency or worksite is vulnerable to attack, immediately begin to assemble the information necessary to craft the message of the Local's collective legislative action: **THE LOCAL'S JOBS SHOULD BE SAVED**. The Local's leadership should begin to collect reports, studies, surveys, budgets, or any other documents, whether or not they are produced by the federal government, which can be used to show that the agency or worksite is satisfactorily performing a vital service. At the same time, the Local's leadership should also begin gathering information about the consequences workforce reductions would have on federal employees, the ability to deliver services, and customer satisfaction. Finally, information should be gathered which documents the Local's past and present efforts to reinvent the service delivery process.

Suggestion 1: USE THE LOCAL'S LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Make sure the Local's Legislative Committee is staffed with highly-motivated colleagues. If your Local has not yet formed a Legislative Committee, do it now! Effective, collective legislative action requires a team effort. One person cannot bear this burden alone.

B. BUILD AN INFORMATON AND LOBBYING NETWORK

Begin to develop a network of contacts that will keep you informed about possible workforce reductions affecting the agency or worksite and then become part of a broad-based lobbying coalition on behalf of your Local. Many of these contacts will be the same as those used during the **RISK ASSESSMENT** phase. Listed here are several possible contacts:

1. The AFGE National Vice President for the District;
2. The AFGE Council to which the Local belongs, if applicable;
3. The AFGE Legislative Department;
4. Reporters for Local newspapers.

Suggestion 1: ADD MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA TO THE NETWORK

Frequently, journalists can be excellent sources of information since the worksite is likely to be a major employer in the community, and thus considered to be highly newsworthy. You should call the assignment editor and find out which reporter is responsible for covering important news about the worksite. The reporter should be told that the possibility of workforce reductions is a story that bears close scrutiny because of the impact such job cuts would have on the surrounding communities. Establishing a relationship with the reporter early on will benefit the Local because of the ongoing exchange of information; and if workforce reductions are eventually proposed, your worksite is more likely to be portrayed sympathetically in the reporter's newspaper.

5. Agency management, both in the field and back in Washington, DC, including any applicable partnership council;
6. The worksite's customers and suppliers;
7. Members of Congress and their staffs.

Suggestion 2: DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS

Check in with the offices of area Representatives and Senators as soon as possible.

Also remember to define the “area” very broadly when considering which Members of Congress to contact. For example, even though the worksite is located in only one Representative’s district, all other Representatives in the area should be contacted because many of the Local’s members may actually live in their districts. That is to say, even though the worksite involved would not actually be in their districts, these other Representatives are still likely to be interested in such inquiries because some of their constituents are likely to be affected.

These Representatives may also be concerned about the ripple effect caused by workforce reductions. Increased unemployment in the Representatives’ districts would have a significant impact on the area’s local governments because of decreased tax revenues and increased demands for service; fewer constituents earning regular paychecks means less business for area firms; and we can’t forget the myriad social problems associated with increases in unemployment. Of course, those three ripple effects frequently induce their own ripple effects. Combine the effects of the various ripples, and we could be talking about a tidal wave, something that can devastate a community.

Don’t rule out contacting any Members of Congress in the area—no matter how unfriendly they appear to be towards the federal government. Some may refuse and others may say yes but merely go through the motions. Some, however, may actually join the Local’s campaign with genuine enthusiasm and prove to be important allies in the difficult days ahead. **You’d be surprised how many budget-cutters can’t stand the sight of their own blood.** That is to say, more than a few Members lose their appetite for meat when the ox to be gored is actually in their own backyard. Rarely a week passes without a report in one newspaper or another that a federal employee-bashing, government-hating, program-cutting, taxes-on-the-rich-avoiding Member of Congress hasn’t intervened with senior officials in the executive branch to save a federal worksite in her or his state or district. Recently, a very senior and very conservative Republican senator from the Deep South urged the Clinton Administration not to close a small Department of Commerce facility in his state.

When calling the offices of Representatives and Senators, you will be referred to their aides. Tell the Members’ aides of the Local’s message, emphasizing the impact that workforce reductions would have on the area. Needless to say, also emphasize that the worksite performs a vital service in an effective and efficient manner. How are ordinary Americans helped by the service provided by members of the Local? If the Local has produced cost-savings or improvements in quality or customer service through the partnership process, highlight these achievements. This will enhance your credibility and perhaps change the mind of a Member who is unfamiliar with the positive role a union like AFGC can play in the federal workplace.

Seek a public commitment from area Members of Congress—as shown by press releases, photo opportunities, or even worksite visits—for the continued existence of your worksite or agency. Such a commitment is helpful for three reasons:

◦The Member develops personal relationships with the Local’s members; that way, the Local’s members will be friends—or at least acquaintances—rather than just noisy constituents, and it will be a lot harder for the Member to say “No!” when the cuts are proposed and he or she is asked for help.

◦It’s a lot harder for a Member to refuse a subsequent request for assistance if he or she has publicly identified with the welfare of the agency or worksite.

◦Finally, the show of force that occurs when a Member makes a public commitment to a worksite, particularly if that Member wields considerable power, can often intimidate colleagues into shelving their job-cutting proposals.

Suggestion 3: PUBLICIZE WORK DONE BY POLITICIANS ON THE LOCAL’S BEHALF

Make sure the Members’ visits receive attention in area media outlets. Save broadcasts and articles of such visits for later use.

8. Area government officials, prominent businesspersons, and public interest groups.

Note: Area powerbrokers in both the public and private sectors have a significant stake in perpetuating your worksite’s existence. The salaries or wages earned by members of the Local keep government treasuries full and businesses in the black. It’s usually quite easy to win the support of area powerbrokers. Ultimately, bankers, county executives, and the like care little about ideology; the economic health of their community is always their paramount concern. Such area powerbrokers are also likely to have relationships with Members of Congress. If a Representative’s aide didn’t give the time of day when you showed up at the district office last week, try showing up the next week with the president of the local chapter of the Chamber of Commerce on one side and the Mayor on the other. Also, look to these powerbrokers to supply dramatic information about what the loss of the worksite would mean to the area.

Finally, look to political action groups, advocacy organizations and other non-profit groups for assistance and allies.

9. Area AFL-CIO leaders.

Note: AFGE is an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the umbrella organization to which almost 100 unions belong. The millions of working women and men who belong to AFL-CIO unions are also your sisters and brothers. Some area AFL-CIO Local presidents may be battle-hardened veterans of collective legislative action; if so, copy their successes and learn from their failures. Your Local's membership in the State Federation and/or Central Labor Council for your area will allow you to formally enlist your AFL-CIO brothers and sisters in the Local's lobbying network. If your Local belongs to neither organization, join up now!

10. Other AFGE Locals.

Suggestion 4: ADD OTHER AFGE LOCALS TO THE NETWORK

If the Local's worksite is threatened, but it appears that the rest of the agency is safe—at least for the time being—the Local still doesn't have to fight this battle by itself. The Local's president should contact the presidents of other AFGE Locals in the agency and ask them to be alert to news about job cuts at the worksite. The presidents of these sister Locals should be reminded that if a workforce reduction proposal is ever announced, your Local will definitely ask for their assistance.

Some Locals will be able to go through their Councils in order to find out which Locals to contact. If your Local is without a Council, you should get in touch with your National Vice President to find out which AFGE Locals would be appropriate to add to your network.

C. KEEP THE LOCAL'S MEMBERS WELL-INFORMED

Keep the membership well-informed about the possibility of job cuts. If kept in the dark until the proposal for workforce reductions for the agency or worksite is announced, they're likely to feel so betrayed that they'll be just as angry at their union as they are at the Congressional budget-hackers who want to cut their jobs. On the other hand, if kept informed, they're likely to appreciate their union and be more willing to participate in collective legislative action. Whether it's regular meetings, newsletters, or telephone trees, you should let the members know what's happening and stamp out the rumors that will inevitably be swirling, either giving them false hope or no hope at all.

D. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ORGANIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Don't forget that these difficult times can often provide you with excellent organizing opportunities. Non-members, seeing that agency officials are either powerless to oppose significant spending cut proposals or perhaps even conniving with Congressional budget-hackers to eliminate jobs, can't help but be impressed by the Local's convincing displays of collective legislative action.

Note: Make sure that the visibility of the Local's collective legislative action is high through regular interaction with the entire workforce. This can be accomplished through one-on-one solicitations, lunch-and-learn sessions, and frequent flyer or newsletter distributions. (See **APPENDIX V** for more information about taking advantage of organizing opportunities.)

III. COLLECTIVE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

If the dreaded day does arrive, remember that a lot can happen from the time when a workforce reduction proposal is announced until the time Members of Congress cast the votes that will determine whether the Local's members keep their jobs—and that's especially true if the Local has been actively preparing for collective legislative action by assembling the information necessary to wage an effective public relations campaign and establishing a network of powerful political allies.

A. SELECT THE THEMES

While this is certainly not an exhaustive list, here are eleven possible themes that can help to focus the Local's message:

1. CUT ENOUGH: Agency X has already been downsized severely over the last five years.

Example: *“It would be difficult to name an agency that has more wholeheartedly embraced the concept of becoming a lean, cost-efficient service provider. In fact, it could be said that Agency X had reinvented itself long before the reinvention of government initiative had even been invented. Since 1979, Agency X has led the way in doing more with less, reducing its budget and staff by 70%.”*

2. UNIQUE SERVICE: Agency X offers a unique service that cannot be offered by any other level of government.

Example: *“Keeping the provision of this service a federal responsibility ensures that a single, unified national standard will continue to be maintained. Allowing each of the fifty states to set its own standard will leave the regulatory process so confused that it will be difficult for businesses to expand and prosper; at the same time, customers will be left vulnerable in those states that are unable to construct the necessary regulatory protections.”*

3. BIG DIVIDENDS: Agency X pays for itself—and then some.

Example: *“Because of the effectiveness of its contract auditing, Agency X is able to save \$7 for every \$1 dollar it spends. If a shrewd businesswoman found an investment with that kind of return, she'd stick with it, and Congress must do the same.”*

4. CONTRACTING OUT IS BAD: Contracting out this service would be both inefficient and ineffective.

Example: *“Numerous studies, including one released earlier this year by the General Accounting Office, show that performing this service in-house with seasoned, well-trained federal employees is more efficient and more effective than it would be to contract out the work. Were it not for the personnel shortage in Agency X (or the necessity of meeting an arbitrary FTE ceiling), contracting out this particular service would not even be under consideration.”*

5. FAT-FREE: Agency X's funding is spent almost entirely on service, not overhead.

Example: *“Overhead expenses at Agency X continue to be less than 3% of the agency's entire appropriation—a record that compares very favorably with comparably-sized insurance firms in the private sector, according to a recent survey in Publication Z.”*

6. GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME: It is unfair to punish Agency X because it is setting the pace for reinvention of

government.

Example: “Agency X’s employees have wholeheartedly embraced the reinvention of government initiative and have consistently worked to run their agency like a business. During a recent visit to one of its regional offices, Vice-President Al Gore commended Agency X for cutting superfluous layers of middle management that had in the past prevented front-line employees from responding promptly to the needs of their customers.”

7. SOLE PROVIDER: The work of Agency X clearly constitutes an inherently governmental function.

Example: “Agency X’s responsibility for ensuring that hazardous waste produced by Department Y is disposed of safely is one that cannot be turned over to the private sector. History has shown that contractors are too willing to cut corners on important safety precautions in order to maximize their profits. The public’s safety must come first. It is imperative that the disposal of such hazardous waste continue to be handled by Agency X.”

8. FOUR-STAR SERVICE: Agency X has compiled an excellent record of service.

Example: “In a report released recently by the National Association for Good Government, a prominent public policy think-tank, Agency X’s employees were credited with taking a business-like approach to their work that ensured customers always came first.”

9. CENTRALIZING MEANS MORE RED TAPE: Consolidating Agency X would reduce effectiveness without creating any efficiencies.

Example: “The increased efficiencies generated by the enthusiastic embrace of dozens of reinvention of government initiatives by Agency X’s dedicated workforce of little more than 900 employees will be lost if the agency’s statutory responsibilities are transferred to Department Y. It’s been proven time and again that streamlined, independent agencies like Agency X are less cumbersome and more cost-efficient than large executive departments. Those bureaucracies are often burdened by too many managers and too much administrative overhead. And as reported by the General Accounting Office—the investigative arm of the Congress—the cost savings realized from transferring the functions of Agency X to Department Y, without the repeal of several significant statutory responsibilities, are negligible at best. What is the point of losing effectiveness without gaining efficiencies?”

10. ACTUALLY, FUNDING SHOULD BE INCREASED: Agency X is already critically under-funded.

Example: “As the report by House Committee Q accompanying H.R. 007 pointed out in some detail, Agency X is already insufficiently funded to adequately audit Department Y’s contracts. At present, the agency merely samples contracts of \$5 million or less. ‘This means,’ said the report ‘that \$4.9 billion of contract costs will be accepted without audit at considerable risk to Department Y. Based on Fiscal Year 1993 experience with Agency X, it is estimated that \$200 million of unallowable costs may not be recouped from the unaudited contractors.’ Can we really afford to throw such large sums of money down the drain at times like this?”

Note: Congress is likely to attempt, in many instances, to eliminate federal employees without eliminating services. The Local needs to make the case that the same level of service cannot be delivered with significantly fewer employees. There comes a time when it’s simply no longer possible to do the same with less and less and less.

11. WHERE THE REAL FAT IS: Agency X is burdened by too many layers of middle management.

Example: “As the GAO audit revealed, Agency X’s ratio of managers to employees is 1:5, considerably higher than it is for comparable firms in the private sector. While such excessive administrative overhead is expensive, it also adds needless red

tape to the process by which services are delivered. Eliminating unnecessary supervisors would not just decrease Agency X's expenses, but it would also allow front-line employees to improve the service delivery process."

B. THE FACT SHEET

The Fact Sheet will give the Local's members a quick, concise summary of the threat facing their agency or worksite and the arguments they will need when lobbying to save their jobs; it will also provide you with the information necessary to produce telephone scripts and sample letters for the members to lobby their Representatives and Senators.

Suggestion 1: THE FACT SHEET SHOULD BE WRITTEN TO INFORM POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Consider producing a Fact Sheet that can be distributed to persons and organizations the Local is trying to add to its lobbying network. For example, when visiting Members of Congress or their aides, it's always helpful to have something in writing to hand to them at the end of meetings. They typically meet with dozens of people every day and cannot reasonably be expected to remember even your most important points. Journalists who often work on tight deadlines are also likely to appreciate being able to refer to the Fact Sheet.

Suggestion 2: THE FACT SHEET SHOULD BE KEPT SHORT AND SIMPLE

Limit the Fact Sheet to no more than two pages. Only the best arguments should be used, not all of the arguments.

Make sure the message can be understood by the members. You can best judge how much complexity the membership can handle.

Make sure the message can be understood by Members of Congress and others whom the Local hopes to influence. Avoid unnecessary technical information.

Suggestion 3: FOOTNOTES ARE NOT NECESSARY

Make sure, however, that the sources for information are close at hand in case questions are asked. Take advantage of every opportunity to make your case, but avoid fabrication and exaggeration. It's a thin line, of course, but the difference should be clear. Mislead a Member of Congress or an area powerbroker and the Local won't just lose a friend, it just might gain an enemy.

Suggestion 4: THE FACT SHEET SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A BIBLE

This is what all members should be using when engaged in collective legislative action. They should all be reciting the same facts and making the same arguments. Few things would discredit your campaign more easily than if some of the Local's members were saying one thing to a Member of Congress, but other members were telling him something else altogether.

Suggestion 5: THE LOCAL'S MEMBERS SHOULD BE CONSULTED AS THE FACT SHEET IS BEING WRITTEN

Consulting with members as the Fact Sheet is drafted makes it more likely that it will be widely accepted. Such consultation is also likely to give you the insight and information necessary to produce the best possible Fact Sheet.

Suggestion 6: HOW THE FACT SHEET SHOULD BE ORGANIZED

a. **WHAT WORK IS DONE:** *How does the work performed by the Local help ordinary Americans? What service is performed at the worksite or by the agency? What is it exactly that the agency does? Why is the service provided by the Local so important?*

b. **WHY THE WORK IS DONE WELL:** *Why is the agency or worksite an effective provider of service? Perhaps some of the themes discussed earlier would be helpful. List any awards given to the worksite.*

c. **WHY THE WORK IS DONE CHEAPLY:** *Why is the agency or worksite an efficient provider of service? Again,*

consider using some of the themes discussed above.

d. 1. WHAT IF THE WORK WAS NOT DONE: *What would happen if this service was no longer performed? Who would suffer from its elimination? Children? Poor people? Businesses? A broad cross-section of the nation's population? What would be the extent of their suffering?*

d. 2. COULD THE WORK STILL BE DONE WITH FEWER EMPLOYEES: *If the workforce is drastically reduced, without reducing statutory requirements, what impact would this personnel cut have on the capability of the agency or worksite to deliver services? How would the customers suffer?*

e. 1. WHY THE WORK CANNOT BE TRANSFERRED: *Why is this service an inherently federal governmental function that cannot be privatized, contracted-out, or handed down to the states? What risks does privatization pose to the effectiveness of service delivery, the integrity of the service delivery process, and the public interest in general?*

e. 2. WHY THE WORK SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE DONE LOCALLY: *Why should this service continue to be delivered at the worksite? If the worksite is consolidated with other worksites in the agency, what consequences will there be for your customers? How much farther would they have to travel for help? Would the "central office" be attentive to the unique needs of the customers in the service delivery area? Would the "central office" be sufficiently staffed to provide the same high level of service now offered by the worksite?*

f. HOW THE AGENCY OR WORKSITE HAS ALREADY BEEN REINVENTED: *What steps has the agency or worksite taken to save money, improve service, and just generally reinvent itself? What has the agency or worksite done to be rewarded with a new lease on life by Congress? Once again, consider using some of the themes discussed above.*

g. HOW THE COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA WILL BE AFFECTED: *How many employees work at that facility? In what cities and towns do they live, for the most part? How much money does the worksite contribute to the area economy, including money spent by the facility for procurement and construction and money spent by the employees themselves from their pay and benefits? Will area services like education suffer if the tax base is eroded because of job losses at your worksite?*

h. WHO SUPPORTS SAVING THE LOCAL'S JOBS: *Who are the Local's allies in this campaign to save your members' jobs? What important area politicians and interest groups have been lined up in support of the Local? This is an opportunity to show that the Local's members are not just fighting to save the jobs of federal employees, but also fighting to ensure that an important service continues to be provided to an appreciative public.*

i. WHAT IS THE LOCAL'S OBJECTIVE: *What is it that the Local wants? Make sure the goal stands out from the rest of the text. For example: "If you share our determination to save Agency X so that ordinary Americans can continue to rely on the important service it provides, please call and write the Members of the House X Committee." Then the Members of Congress in question can be identified and readers told how they can be contacted.*

j. HOW PEOPLE CAN HELP: *Who can people call to answer their questions or in order to find out more information about the Local's efforts? Make sure the Fact Sheet identifies a member of the Local and her or his phone number and office address to handle such inquiries. Finally, "AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, LOCAL __," should appear prominently on every page of the Fact Sheet; after all, this document will be an excellent organizing tool.*

Note: It may be necessary to periodically update the Fact Sheet to take into account new information, new arguments, and new allies. It definitely will be necessary to update the Fact Sheet periodically to describe the latest objective because as your agency or worksite progresses through the legislative process, it will be considered by different sets of Members of Congress that your Local's members will have to lobby.

After completing the Fact Sheet, it's time to make the tools members can use to undertake collective legislative action. Not all of the members will have the time, interest, or skill to engage in political participation unless you make it easy by telling them the message they need to send to the area Members of Congress and the various ways that message can be sent, including telephone calls and letters.

C. HOW TO CALL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Suggestion 1: DETERMINE HOW MUCH COMPLEXITY YOUR LOCAL'S MEMBERSHIP CAN HANDLE

Some members may possess the gift of gab and need little instruction as to what to say. Others may need a little more help. Only you can make the best determination as to how much assistance your members need to mount effective telephone barrages of Congressional targets.

Suggestion 2: TELL THE LOCAL'S MEMBERS WHAT TO EXPECT

Many members have probably never before called their Representative and Senators and may approach this task with some apprehension. But you can easily take the mystery out of what is actually a very simple process. The members should not expect to speak to an actual Member of Congress. Aides will take their calls and pass on their messages to the Members. Congressional staff have been instructed to lean over backwards to please members of the public. Your members should expect the aides who answer their calls to be both patient and polite.

Suggestion 3: TELL THE LOCAL'S MEMBERS HOW TO CALL

Your members may need to be told how to get in touch with the Members of Congress you've targeted. It's cheaper to call district offices, which are often located nearby, but the Local's telephone barrages will have far more impact if they reach the Washington, DC, offices of the Congressional targets. If the members are directed to call the Washington, DC, offices, you have two choices:

1) listing the telephone numbers of all the Congressional targets; or

2) merely providing the telephone number for the Capitol Hill switchboard, (202) 224-3121, which might save needed space on the Fact Sheet.

If the second choice is made, instruct the members to tell the operator with which office they need to speak each time they call; some Congressional aides will even transfer calls to other offices, saving your members both the bother and expense of having to make multiple long-distance calls.

Suggestion 4: DECIDE WHICH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO CALL

If you are unsure as to which Members of Congress represent the communities in your area, please contact your National Vice President or AFG's Legislative Department.

Here's an outline that might be useful in composing sample telephone scripts:

TELEPHONE SCRIPT FOR CALLING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN DEFENSE OF JOBS

"I'd like to leave a message for the Senator / Representative."

Note: The aide will probably ask for the member's name and address in order to send him/her a written response, signed by the Member of Congress. It's important that your members supply this information. If a message is delivered anonymously, it is unlikely that the aide will pass it on to the Member of Congress.

The next sentence in the telephone script might introduce the topic you want the members to discuss:

Example: **"I'm calling to urge the Representative to vote in favor of the appropriations bill for Agency X when it reaches the House floor next week."**

The three best arguments from the Fact Sheet should be added to the telephone script.

Example: **"Agency X has an excellent record of service and deserves the Representative's support. In a report**

released recently by the National Association for Good Government, Agency X's employees were credited with taking a business-like approach to their work that ensured customers always came first. Further, overhead expenses at Agency X continue to be less than 3% of the agency's entire appropriation from last year. Finally, Agency X's employees have whole-heartedly embraced the reinvention of government initiative, and are credited with devising several inventive schemes for saving the taxpayers money without reducing the high quality of service they consistently provide to the agency's customers."

Next, the members might be instructed to ask the aide whether her boss supports the agency. There are, of course, three possible answers.

1. The Member of Congress will vote to save the agency.

The members should thank the aide on behalf of her boss, but they should also ask what the Member is doing to persuade Congressional colleagues to also support the agency. The aide is likely to say she doesn't know or provide a non-committal answer.

Here is what your members could say:

Example: **"The regional office of Agency X, located in the very heart of Representative Y's district, employs over 800 employees, including myself. It is the second largest employer in the entire Tri-County area. The local Chamber of Commerce has estimated that the regional office injects almost \$500 million into Representative Y's district. Please ask Representative Y to send me a letter detailing how he is working to save the jobs of his constituents. Thank you for your time."**

2. Or the Member of Congress has not decided whether he will vote to save the agency. If this is the case, it's time for the Member to be pulled gently off the fence.

Here is what your members could say:

Example: **"I'm disappointed to learn that Representative Y hasn't decided whether he should work to prevent so many of his constituents from losing their jobs. Representative Y needs to be told that Agency X's regional office employs over 800 employees, including myself. It is the second largest employer in the entire Tri-County area. The Chamber of Commerce has estimated that the regional office injects almost \$500 million into Representative Y's district. Please ask Representative Y to send me a letter explaining why he has not yet come out in support of his constituents on this important issue. Thank you for your time."**

3. Finally, the Member of Congress may have decided to vote to take away the Local's jobs. The Member must be made to understand that he will suffer politically for this betrayal of the Local's interests.

While cautioning your members to always remain polite, here is what they could be instructed to say in response:

Example: **"I am very disappointed to hear that Representative Y has decided to take away my job, and the jobs of almost 800 of my colleagues at Agency X's regional office, which is located in the very heart of his district. Mayor S of City T, the largest urban center in the entire Tri-County area, who happens to be a Republican, is also very disappointed in Representative Y's decision since the loss of 800 paychecks will be a devastating blow to the local economy. And, as you might expect, the Chamber of Commerce, which worked closely with us to save the regional office, will also be disappointed. For most people in his district, this is the most important vote Representative X will cast during his entire career, and it is one we shall not soon forget. Please ask Representative X to send me a letter explaining why he decided to vote to take away the jobs of 800 constituents. Thank you for your time."**

Suggestion 5: HAVE CALLS MADE BY PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE LOCAL

After all of the Local's members have called, involve colleagues at work who are not members. Again, this would be an excellent organizing opportunity. Investigate the possibility of management becoming involved in the phone campaign. (Even a director can read a few simple words over the telephone.) Finally, ask area powerbrokers who are part of the Local's network to call your Congressional targets. Make it easy for them by adapting the telephone script. Remember: the more telephone calls made on behalf of the Local, the more influence the Local will have over its Congressional targets.

D. HOW TO CORRESPOND WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Follow up on telephone calls with letters to area Representatives and Senators. While most Members of Congress pay attention to telephone messages, it's letters that really cause them to sit up and take notice. According to their reasoning, making a telephone call is relatively easy; but sitting down and actually writing a letter takes more time and thus shows a greater commitment from the constituent to the issue.

Again, you can make the best determination as to how much information the members need when writing their letters to Members of Congress. Remember: Members are more influenced by a barrage of correspondence if the letters are personalized. While a Member of Congress is still impressed that a constituent took the time to write her a letter, even if she knows that it was copied from a master letter, she'd be even more impressed if that constituent had taken the time to write his own letter. Therefore, it would be best if the members use the facts and arguments from the Fact Sheet, but express them in their own words.

Suggestion 1: DECIDE WHICH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SHOULD BE SENT LETTERS

If you are uncertain as to which Members of Congress represent the communities in the Local's area, please contact your National Vice President or AFGE's Legislative Department.

Suggestion 2: TELL THE LOCAL'S MEMBERS HOW TO SEND THEIR LETTERS

Tell the members where to send their letters. Rather than take up space listing the addresses of your various Congressional targets, why not just list two addresses, one for the U.S. Senate and one for the U.S. House of Representatives? Here's how:

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Suggestion 3: HOLD LETTER-WRITING WORKSHOPS

Many AFGE members perform important jobs that simply don't require them to do much writing, and their skills may have deteriorated. No matter how hard they want to participate in letter-writing campaigns, some members may simply be unable to do so without help. In order to get these members involved in this phase of collective legislative action, it may be necessary for your Local to hold letter-writing workshops. In a relaxed, collegial atmosphere, perhaps during lunch or after hours at the Local's office, you can help these members write their own letters without making them feel self-conscious or ashamed.

Suggestion 4: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ORGANIZING OPPORTUNITIES

*After all of the members have written, try to involve colleagues at work who are not members. This would be yet another excellent organizing opportunity. (See **APPENDIX V** for more information on taking advantage of organizing opportunities.) Then see if management is interested in participating. Finally, other prominent members of the network—area powerbrokers—should be asked to write letters to Congressional targets. Your Local should supply them with whatever information they might need to do so. As with telephone calls, the more letters written, the more influence the Local will have over its Congressional targets.*

Note: See APPENDIX II and APPENDIX III for two outlines that can be used in writing the Local's own sample letter. The first constitutes a bare-bones approach, which would encourage members to write their own letters; the second is a more detailed approach, one which would require members to do little more than copy the sample letter.

E. NETWORK LETTER

After members of the Local and other members of the network have sent individual letters to Members of Congress in defense of the Local's jobs, it's time to combine forces and write a letter on behalf of the Local's entire network, signed by all of its members, especially those who are prominent in the area. A Member of Congress who receives such a letter is often taken aback by such a convincing display of collective legislative action.

Suggestion 1: KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET

Since it will be necessary to obtain the permission of network members before they become signatories, it's best to keep the network letter short; the less of it there is, the less there will be over which your network's members can quibble.

Suggestion 2: EMPHASIZE WHAT THE LOSS OF JOBS WILL MEAN TO THE AREA'S COMMUNITIES

Since the very purpose of the network letter is to emphasize the broad-based support the agency has generated, the network letter should emphasize the damage that the communities in the area will suffer if the Local's jobs are lost.

Suggestion 3: ORGANIZE THE LIST OF SIGNATORIES

The name of the Local member who is the network leader should come first. The most distinguished members of the network—those whose support for the Local would matter the most to Congressional targets—should also be given prominent places on the list of signatories. If the network is an extended one, it may become necessary to extend the list of signatories over several pages. No problem: the longer the list, the more impressive is your network letter. Make sure the positions of the signatories are identified right under their names; if, for example, a signatory is the chairwoman of the board of the biggest employer in your state, be sure that is indicated.

Suggestion 4: ADD TO THE LIST OF SIGNATORIES

Consider including those who aren't actually members of the network in this effort. For example, ask colleagues at work who are not AFGE members as well as the agency's managers to add their names to the network letter.

Suggestion 5: NAME THE NETWORK

Some names which might be considered for the network include: "The Coalition to Save Agency X", "The Friends of Agency X", or "The Committee to Defend Agency X".

Suggestion 6: PUBLICIZE THE SUCCESS OF THE NETWORK LETTER

*Make sure that the Local's AFGE affiliation is prominent. This network letter is the ultimate organizing tool: concrete proof that AFGE is a major player in the area, one that is taken seriously by all of the powerbrokers. As such, the network letter should be displayed proudly and prominently throughout the worksite. (See **APPENDIX V** for tips on taking advantage of organizing opportunities.)*

*Finally, make sure the media in the area know about the network letter, perhaps by way of a news release and—if warranted—a news conference. The publicity will generate more members for the network. Make sure any articles and broadcasts dealing with the network letter are clipped and taped, and then sent to the Local's Congressional targets. The Local's efforts are getting noticed back home, and if the Local's members haven't gotten noticed yet by the area's Members of Congress, they should now. **Call AFGE's Communications Department with any questions you may have about media outreach opportunities at (202) 639-6423.** See **APPENDIX VI** for tips on developing relationships with the media.*

See APPENDIX IV for an outline of a sample network letter.

F. MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

As was suggested earlier, the members of the Local's Legislative Committee should try to meet with area Members of Congress as soon as possible.

However, some Members of Congress whom you have targeted may have been unavailable to meet with the Local's delegation at that time. It might have been that they were genuinely busy. But it might also have been that they just didn't think the problems of the Local were worthy of their attention. However, if the Local goes ahead and mounts telephone and mail barrages, assembles a broad-based area coalition in support of a network letter, and generates favorable publicity in the media from those three activities, it's likely that those heretofore hard-to-find Members of Congress just might make the time to meet with the Local's delegation.

The suggestions in this section may be helpful in preparing for and conducting meetings with Members of Congress, whether these Congressional targets put the delegation on their schedule right away or failed to do so until they finally understood that the Local wasn't going away.

Suggestion 1: HOW TO SCHEDULE THE MEETINGS

Secure commitments from reliable members of the Local and prominent members of the Local's network—area powerbrokers—to attend meetings with Members of Congress. Call up the Members' district offices and find out when the Local's Congressional targets will next be returning home. Tell the Members' aides how many people wish to be in the Local's delegation.

Remember: Generally, the more people who demonstrate interest, the more likely the Members are to schedule meetings. Not every member of the Local and the network may be permitted to attend, however, due to space restrictions or the Members' preferences. Congressional aides may ask the leader of the Local's delegation to supply their bosses with information about the topics the delegation wishes to discuss. If properly adapted, the Fact Sheet might be an excellent briefing paper for Members of Congress and their aides.

Suggestion 2: PUBLICIZE THE MEETINGS

Tell the members of the Local and the members of the network about your Congressional meetings. They'll realize that collective legislative action is getting results, and will be encouraged to work even harder. Tell colleagues at the worksite who aren't members of the Local. They'll realize that those who work together get results, and those who stay apart get ignored. Finally, tell members of the media. If they ignored the Local before, they won't any more.

Suggestion 3: HOW TO SELECT THE DELEGATION

Selecting the members of the delegation to meet with Members of Congress is an important task. Which members of the Local and which members of the network would best represent the Local? Such determinations are best made by you. If a member of the network has a personal connection with the Congressional target, make sure she is taken along.

Serious consideration should be given to taking along the National Vice President for the District or the Council President for the Local, if applicable. These senior AFGE officials have considerable experience dealing with Members of Congress; they can provide Locals with the benefit of their expertise and still respect the prerogatives of the Local's leadership.

Suggestion 4: HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETINGS

While the Fact Sheet should serve as the basis for the preparations, the delegation should also think about any difficult questions that might be asked. For example, what are the arguments being advanced to support cutting jobs at the agency or worksite?

Go into the meeting expecting the Member to ask the delegation where the budget should be cut. "The budget deficit is enormous. If Congress shouldn't cut funding for your agency, where should it be cut?" she might ask. Make sure the members of the delegation agree upon an answer. Failure to do so could leave the delegation vulnerable to a divide-and-conquer strategy. For example, the delegation leader might say that defense spending needs to be cut in order to reduce the deficit. But a member of the Local's network might be a businessperson with defense contracts. What if he takes issue with the call for reductions in defense spending right there in the meeting? A disaster, that's what.

The role of the leader of the delegation should be as a master of ceremonies, someone who discusses generally the purpose of the meeting and then introduces members of the delegation to address certain topics. For example, one member of the Local can talk about the efficiency arguments for preserving the agency or worksite. Another member of the Local can take up the

effectiveness arguments. A member of the Local's network—a mayor or county executive, perhaps—can discuss how the loss of jobs would affect the area. Another member of the delegation—a prominent businessperson, for example—could talk about how the area economy might suffer. But specialization should only go so far. In case one member of the delegation is unable to attend the meeting or falls victim to nervousness, the rest of the delegation must be prepared to pick up the slack.

Suggestion 5: GET COMMITMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

If the Member expresses support for the Local's jobs, don't take "Yes" for an answer. Ask him what he'll do to help the agency or worksite besides merely casting the correct vote. Will he lobby his colleagues on the Local's behalf? Will he introduce any necessary legislation or amendments? Will he use his media contacts? What advice does he have for expanding the Local's collective legislative action? Will he use his influence to get other Members of Congress to meet with the Local's delegation?

Tell Members of Congress the steps the Local has taken in mounting collective legislative action in defense of its jobs. The more work the Local has done, the more seriously they'll take the Local's delegation. Make it clear that you intend to stay in close contact with the Members. Ask the Members to assign aides to be the Local's staff contacts.

Suggestion 6: ORGANIZE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Invite Members of Congress to appear at community meetings to discuss the threat to your Local's jobs. A Member is more likely to attend such a meeting if it appears from the agenda that the speakers and attendees represent a broad cross-section of the area's population. This is where the area powerbrokers in your lobbying network will be useful. And, of course, the Member is more likely to leave impressed by the area's support for saving your Local's jobs if the meeting is well-attended. There is no need to spend the Local's money to rent a hall. For example, any nearby house of worship will do quite nicely.

G. SELECTING CONGRESSIONAL TARGETS

You've heard the expression "all politics is local?" We all know that Members of Congress must tend carefully to their own backyards in order to be re-elected. That being so, it is unlikely that a Representative from a district outside of the Local's area or a Senator from another state will take an interest in the Local's concerns unless they have an extraordinary passion for the agency and the customers it serves.

Therefore, the Local's targets will essentially consist of those Members of Congress who represent the Local's members. That means the Local will have at least three Congressional targets: two Senators from the state and one Representative from the area.

But some of those targets will be more valuable than others if they hold membership on certain Congressional Committees.

1. APPROPRIATIONS TARGETS

This category includes Members of Congress who sit on the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees which have jurisdiction over your agency. Legislation that appropriates money for your agency originates in these two Subcommittees.

Note 1: Contact your National Vice President; the Council President for the Local, if applicable; or AFGE's Legislative Department to determine which House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have jurisdiction over your agency and whether any of your Congressional targets are members of these panels.

Note 2: The more senior the member on the Subcommittee (chairperson or ranking minority member), the more influence he will be able to use on behalf of the Local.

Note 3: If one of the Local's Congressional targets is not on the Appropriations Subcommittee but is a Member of the full House or Senate Appropriations Committees, he might still prove very useful since the Subcommittee's work has to be approved by the full Committee. Remember, however, that Members who sit on the full Appropriations Committees tend to defer to the judgment of their colleagues who are on the Appropriations Subcommittees.

Note 4: **The Local's leadership should immediately begin following the work of the Appropriations Committees because the Republicans intend to cut the current budgets of federal agencies; using a process known as rescissions, Congress could slash funding that your agency is using to provide service and meet its payroll during the balance of this fiscal year.**

This strategy is completely unprecedented. But that shows you just how determined many Republicans are to take away your jobs.

2. AUTHORIZATIONS TARGETS

This category includes Members who sit on the House and Senate Authorization Subcommittees that have jurisdiction over your agency. These Subcommittees are responsible for reauthorizing the services provided by your agency and advising the Appropriations Committees on the necessary level of funding for your agency.

Note 1: Contact your National Vice President; the Council President for the Local, if applicable; or AFGE's Legislative Department to determine which House and Senate Authorization Subcommittees have jurisdiction over the agency and whether any of the Local's Congressional targets are members of those panels.

Note 2: The more senior the member on the Subcommittee (chairperson or ranking minority member), the more influence he will be able to use on behalf of the Local.

Note 3: If the Local's Congressional target is not on the Authorization Subcommittee but is a member of the full House or Senate Authorization Committees, he might still prove to be very useful since the Subcommittee's work has to be approved by the full Committee. Remember, however, that Members who sit on the full Authorization Committees tend to defer to the judgment of their colleagues who are on the Authorization Subcommittees.

Note 4: While the Authorization Committees recommend how much funding agencies should receive, it's the Appropriations Committees that ultimately decide how much they get. This means that if the Local is successful in the Authorization Committees, it must still defend itself in the Appropriations Committees. However, if the Local is unsuccessful in the Authorization Committees, it still has an opportunity to recoup its losses in the Appropriations Committees.

3. NEITHER OF THE ABOVE TARGETS

If none of the Local's Congressional targets serve on the Appropriations Committees or the Authorization Committees for your agency, here are some options:

a. Does one of the Local's Members of Congress have a relationship with a colleague who serves on one of the relevant Committees? And would this colleague be willing to intervene on the Local's behalf?

b. Is the National Vice President for the District familiar with Members of Congress on the relevant committees who might be willing to help?

c. If applicable, what about the President of the Council? Could he or she be of some assistance? Does he or she know of Locals in the Council that have relationships with influential Members?

d. Do members of the Local's network have relationships with Members of Congress outside the area? For example, a prominent businesswoman in the network might have gone to school with a Member of Congress who might be helpful to the Local. Or a public interest group representing the agency's customers that happens to be in the network might introduce the Local's delegation to a potentially helpful Member of Congress.

APPENDIX I

FACT SHEET OUTLINE

1. TITLE (Include the agency's name)
2. WHAT THE AGENCY DOES (Definition of the service provided by the agency or worksite)
3. WHY THE AGENCY DESERVES SUPPORT
 - A. Effectiveness arguments
 - B. Efficiency arguments
 - C. Consequences of eliminating the service provided by the agency or worksite or consequences of significantly reducing the ability of the agency or worksite to deliver that service
 - D. Arguments for keeping the service provided by the agency at the federal level or arguments for keeping the service provided by the worksite from being consolidated at another location
4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE AREA IF JOBS ARE LOST (Details about how the loss of the worksite will hurt the communities in the area)
5. SOME OF THE PROMINENT PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO SUPPORT THE LOCAL'S JOBS (Area politicians, business groups, and interest groups)
6. HOW OTHERS CAN HELP (Local's current objective)
7. FOR MORE INFORMATION (Whom to contact)

APPENDIX II

SAMPLE LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN DEFENSE OF OUR JOBS (Bare-bones Approach)

1. NAME
2. ADDRESS

3. DATE

4. SALUTATION: **“Dear Representative / Senator:”**

5. INTRODUCTION: **Why you are writing**

6. WHY YOUR AGENCY DESERVES THE MEMBER’S SUPPORT

Example:

A. Efficiency Argument 1: saving taxpayers money through auditing;

B. Efficiency Argument 2: federal employees can perform this work more efficiently than contractor employees;

C. Inherently governmental function argument: this work simply should not be performed by contractors.

7. PERSONAL AND LOCAL REASONS FOR MEMBER TO SUPPORT YOUR AGENCY

Example:

A. Loss of 900 jobs at the regional office;

B. \$400 million injected into the local economy annually;

C. Area officials and businesspersons who are supporting us.

8. WHAT THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS SHOULD DO

A. Vote in favor of agency’s appropriation;

B. Understand importance of vote to you and the area;

C. Respond to you in writing.

9. CLOSING: **“Sincerely,”**

10. YOUR NAME

APPENDIX III

SAMPLE LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN DEFENSE OF OUR JOBS (Detailed Approach)

1. NAME
2. ADDRESS
3. DATE

4. SALUTATION: “Dear Representative / Senator:”

5. INTRODUCTION: “I am writing to urge you to support full funding for Agency X when its appropriations bill is considered by the full Senate Appropriations Committee next week.”

6. WHY YOUR AGENCY DESERVES MEMBER’S SUPPORT: “As you may know, Agency X is responsible for auditing the billions and billions of dollars of contracts entered into by Department Y. Because of the effectiveness of its contract auditing, Agency X is able to save the taxpayers \$7 for every \$1 it spends, according to a recent study by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress. If a shrewd businesswoman found an investment with that kind of return, she’d consider herself fortunate and stick with it—and Congress must do the same. If Agency X is abolished, the work that it performs would have to be performed by contractors, who consistently have been found to be less effective and less efficient than federal employees. In addition, contract auditing is an inherently governmental function and cannot be turned over to contractors. The fox must not be left to guard the henhouse!”

7. PERSONAL AND LOCAL REASONS FOR MEMBER TO SUPPORT YOUR AGENCY: “Agency X’s regional office, which employs almost 1,000 of your constituents, including myself, is located in the southern half of our state, which, as you know, has still not recovered from the recession. In fact, the regional office is the second largest employer in the entire Tri-County area. My colleagues and I at the regional office inject almost \$400 million into the local economy. Our campaign to save Agency X—and its regional office in your state / district—has the support of several local politicians with whom you are doubtlessly familiar, including Mayor T of City J and County Administrator I, a Republican and the finance chairman of your last campaign. The local Chambers of Commerce for A, B, and C counties have also been working with us closely in our campaign.”

8. WHAT YOU WANT THE MEMBER TO DO: “Again, Senator P, I urge you to vote in favor of the appropriation for Agency X when the measure is considered by the full Senate Appropriations Committee next week. Considering the high stakes for me, my colleagues, my community, and my state, please understand that this likely will be the most important vote you cast while in Congress. I will be following your actions relating to this matter very closely. I look forward to your response to my letter. If you will support Agency X, please tell me what you did to convince your colleagues to vote likewise. If, however, you will oppose Agency X, please tell me and almost 1,000 of my colleagues why you decided to take away our jobs.”

9. CLOSING: “Sincerely,”
10. NAME

APPENDIX IV

SAMPLE NETWORK LETTER

1. NAME OF NETWORK
2. ADDRESS

3. DATE

4. ADDRESSEE:

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives / U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515 / 20510

5. SALUTATION: **“Dear Representative / Senator:”**

6. DECLARATION:

Example: “We, the undersigned, an unprecedented coalition of representatives from labor, business, government, and philanthropy, in the Tri-County area, urge you to oppose any effort to abolish Agency X when a vote on its appropriation is considered by the House / Senate K Appropriations Subcommittee later this month.”

7. WHY AGENCY X’S EXISTENCE IS IMPORTANT TO THE AREA:

Example: “Agency X, in the form of its regional office, located in downtown Z, is of great importance to communities throughout your district / state.”

Insert those facts from your Fact Sheet that show why preserving the jobs of the Local’s members is so important to the area.

8. WHAT THE NETWORK WANTS FROM THE MEMBER:

Example: “Again, Representative / Senator _____, our organization urges you to support full funding for Agency X when its appropriation is considered by the House / Senate K Appropriations Subcommittee later this month. Senior representatives of our organization are interested in meeting with you to discuss this important matter in more detail. Please let us know when and where such a meeting would be convenient.”

9. CLOSING: **“Sincerely,”**

10. SIGNATORIES (COLUMN 1)

SIGNATORIES (COLUMN 2)

Your Name

Name of Distinguished
Position

Member of Your Network

Position

APPENDIX V

ORGANIZING TIPS

A. 10 TIPS FOR PRODUCING YOUR ORGANIZING LEAFLETS

1. Only use one central theme per leaflet.
2. Don't use too much text.
3. Use graphics, photographs, charts, or other illustrations.
4. Avoid jargon or details about which people wouldn't care.
5. Remind your readers of your long-term goals.
6. Clearly indicate the action you want your members to take.
7. Write about issues that concern your members.
8. Write from your members point of view, not your Local's.
9. Use bright colors, such as yellow or blue.
10. Use different styles and sizes of type. In general, you should not use more than two different styles.

B. UNION PRIVILEGE BENEFITS YOU CAN BRAG ABOUT

The AFGE Union Privilege Benefits are tools that build a strong Local through membership growth and keep a Local strong through membership retention. These benefits are exclusively reserved for Local members and can save more than the cost of annual dues by using just one or two of the benefits, because neither AFGE nor the AFL-CIO makes any money on these programs. Low-interest credit cards, personal loans, home mortgages, free legal services, help on financing a college education and many other benefits and discounts serve the Local well by reaching every employee's common denominator: the pocket book.

Requests for organizing materials featuring the benefits are available to Locals without charge (in reasonable amounts). Locals have access to the full resources of the National Benefits Coordinator, who is assigned to promote the economic clout of labor, achieved through training, education, problem resolution, customer service, and improving and implementing benefits for all AFGE members. Many Locals have elected or appointed a Local Benefit Coordinator who is the members' primary contact for information and access to the programs. For more information on how to use these programs, contact AFGE'S Membership & Organizing Department at (202) 639-6410.

C. ORGANIZING FLYERS YOU CAN USE

1. 10 Good Reasons To Join AFGE (action on legislative and on-the-job issues)
2. Is Self Service Always The Best (the union does not have to assist non-members on statutory appeals)
3. Some People Think They Don't Need A Union (but they're wrong—directed at employees who may be facing RIF or base closure)
4. Join The Team (the AFGE Legislative, Communications, and Field Services Departments, and how they work for AFGE members)
5. Inside AFGE—AFGE In Perspective (a brief write-up about AFGE)

Note: All flyers are free of charge—in reasonable amounts and depending on availability. Call AFGE's Membership & Organizing Department at (202) 639-6410.

APPENDIX VI

COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

An effective, ongoing external PR program depends to a great extent on developing good rapport with representatives of the news media. Call the Communications Department with any questions you may have about media outreach opportunities at (202) 639-6423. You must get to know your local media contacts and let them get to know you.

A. MAKING A LIST

One of your most valuable possessions as you begin working with the media will be your news media contact list. A good initial source for media outlets and their addresses and phone numbers is the Yellow Pages. A rundown of titles and assignments can be found in two volumes that should be available in the reference section of your library: **Editor and Publisher Yearbook** and **Broadcasting and Cable TV Yearbook**. Your list should include the daily and weekly newspapers, local special-interest and trade publications, city-based or regional magazines, labor publications, radio and television stations, cable TV outlets and wire services, including Associated Press and United Press International. If these wires do not have bureaus in your community, check the nearest larger city.

B. GETTING STARTED

Call and introduce yourself—mornings are better than afternoons because of deadlines. Identify yourself as the media representative for your Local; tell them who your Local represents and how your Local serves the membership and the community. Develop a media kit for reporters and editors, providing background information to help the media familiarize themselves with your Local. Such information should include:

- A written description of the size of your Local's bargaining unit and the number and type of employees you represent.
- Names, phone number(s) and biographies of elected officers.
- The Local's media representative(s) and their office and home phone number.
- Structure of AFGE—Local, District, National Headquarters. Mention that AFGE is the largest federal employee union representing some 700,000 government employees throughout the US and overseas. Don't forget to emphasize AFGE's affiliation with the AFL-CIO.
- Latest copy of your Local's newsletter and/or the Government Standard.

Establish a pattern for continuous and routine contacts with the media by phone and through written materials—local newsletter, news releases, media advisories. Invite reporters to your union activities. Arrange informal meetings with your local officers and media representative(s) to help the media familiarize themselves with the activities and issues that are of concern to your Local.

C. MEDIA DEADLINES

Morning newspapers: Four p.m. the day before publication for general news; 8 p.m. for late-breaking news; and 11 p.m., the absolute latest for major breaking news. **Evening newspapers:** Anytime of day before publication for general news; 7-9 a.m. the day of publication for breaking news; 11 a.m. the day of publication for major breaking news. **Weekly newspapers:** Two or three days prior to publication. **Wire services:** Anytime, but more receptive during regular business hours on weekdays when better staffed. **TV/radio reporters:** Usually busiest in the late afternoon, prior to the evening news, and many radio newsrooms have hourly news deadlines. Both appreciate news as much in advance as possible—preferably four to six hours for TV and two hours for radio.