

# House of Representatives

## ***1. Insisting on Fair Trade: Standing in Solidarity with the Steelworkers (56)***

AFGE supported legislation that would have directed the President to undertake the necessary steps to prevent foreign steel from being dumped into the American market, and unfairly putting even more American steelworkers out of their jobs. H.R. 975 would simply have ensured that the volume of imported steel products did not exceed the average volume for the 36-month period preceding July 1997.

As National President Bobby L. Harnage, Sr. wrote in a letter to lawmakers prior to the vote,

“Although this legislation includes tough measures, its enactment would simply ensure that steel imports during any month don’t exceed the average tonnage volume of steel that was imported at the time much of the dumping began. Moreover, the legislation would expire three years after its enactment.

“With 10,000 steelworkers out of work, enactment of this legislation is necessary to prevent foreign manufacturers from using the American market as a dumping ground for their product. A strong and vibrant steel industry is essential to the well-being of thousands of steelworkers, but also to their own local communities and economies where they live, where they pay taxes, and where they buy the goods and services produced by others with their hard-earned income. A strong and vibrant steel industry is also essential to America’s national defense. We simply cannot afford to allow the destruction of this basic industry and the resulting reliance upon foreign steel producers for this important product.”

H.R. 975 passed the House by a vote of 289-141, on March 17. However, Senate opponents of the measure subsequently prevented the legislation from even being brought up for a vote.

## ***2. Standing up for FEHBP: Preserving Our Health Care Benefits (301)***

Although AFGE does not take a position on the issue of a woman’s right to an abortion, this union strongly opposes any reduction in health care benefits for federal employees. That’s why AFGE strongly supported an attempt by Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) to strike provisions from the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2490) that prohibited plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program from providing coverage for abortions. DeLauro’s amendment was defeated by a vote of 230-188, on July 15.

### **3. Providing Adequate Funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs: Ensuring Veterans Receive the Care they Deserve (390)**

AFGE supported efforts by Representative Bob Filner (D-CA) to increase appropriations for veterans' health care to \$20 billion, consistent with the *Independent Budget*, a comprehensive budget analysis of the Department of Veterans' Affairs prepared by four major veterans service organizations. Filner's amendment to the VA-HUD FY 2000 appropriations bill would have increased funding for veterans' health care by \$1.1 billion in emergency spending. By designating the increase as emergency spending Representative Filner's amendment did not require decreases in other important federal programs; however, it would have shown that the Congress acknowledged that "VA health care is drastically underfunded and in danger of collapse, and we must change that."

Opponents of Filner's amendment succeeded in securing a ruling from the chair that the measure was out of order because, they insisted, it violated the 1974 Budget Act. Filner appealed the ruling of the chair. However, the AFGE-opposed ruling was upheld by a vote of 219 to 198, on September 8.

### **4. Squandering the Surplus: Anti-Worker Tax Cut #1 (333)**

AFGE opposed legislation (H.R. 2488) that would have slashed federal taxes by \$792 billion over 10 years. The tax package was strongly criticized for being too large and too generous to the wealthy and businesses. As was reported in the media, the legislation included billions and billions of dollars in tax breaks for multinational corporations and scores of special interest provisions. Even supporters of the legislation criticized the tax package as being directed more towards businesses than families. Moreover, the legislation would have made it impossible to use the surplus to make Social Security and Medicare even more secure and would surely have required massive cuts in discretionary spending, the funding used to run agencies and pay salaries.

As National President Bobby L. Harnage, Sr., told lawmakers before the vote:

"Federal employees, federal retirees, and their families have a special stake in ensuring that the surplus is not squandered on a tax cut skewed towards corporations and the wealthy. Since 1980, we have contributed more than \$200 billion towards deficit reduction in the form of lost and delayed pay raises and retirement benefits. That is why AFGE strongly opposes this tax cut legislation. After attending to the needs of Social Security and Medicare and adjusting the appropriations caps, the Congress should consider a smaller tax cut targeted at working and middle class Americans."

However, the House passed the anti-worker tax cut legislation by a vote of 223-208, on July 22.

## **5. *Squandering the Surplus: Anti-Worker Tax Cut #2 (379)***

After technical changes to the anti-worker tax cut bill were made in a House-Senate conference, the House considered the resulting report (H.R. 2488). Because of mounting opposition, the vote on the conference report was slightly closer than the one on the House's own bill. However, the anti-worker tax cut conference report still passed the House by a vote of 221-206. At the urging of AFGE and numerous other progressive groups, the President vetoed the legislation, on September 23.

## **6. *Across-the-Board Cuts: Protecting the Important Work of Government #1 (77)***

AFGE opposed the House budget resolution (H. Con. Res. 68) because it would have required staggering cuts in non-defense discretionary spending, the money used to run agencies other than the Department of Defense (DoD) and pay the salaries of those agencies' employees, in order to pay for a ten-year tax cut totalling almost \$800 billion. Worse, the measure would have prevented the use of the Social Security surplus to pay for the federal government's important work.

Lawmakers in favor of such massive tax cuts claim that the budget surplus makes their revenue reductions possible. However, the budget surplus is largely a mirage. The only reason there is a surplus on paper is because spending is being measured against the very tight budget caps agreed to in 1997. Before then, spending was measured against the amount needed to keep programs operating at the previous year's levels. Estimates by the Economic Policy Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) say that about 90% of the so-called surplus actually represents budget cuts below the previous year's spending level. In the 1997 budget deal, virtually all the reductions assumed for next year come out of non-defense discretionary spending, the category of funding used to run agencies and pay salaries in agencies other than DoD. According to CBPP, the difference between the "capped" balanced budget and maintaining current levels of spending is conservatively estimated at \$595 billion over the next several years. That is, in order to stay under the caps, cuts of almost \$600 billion in discretionary spending will have to be made—and sooner rather than later. And that's *before* any \$800 billion tax cut is considered.

If the spending caps were not bad enough, both the Congress and the President have painted themselves into an even tighter corner by vowing not to spend a dime of the Social Security surplus. In the past, the surplus revenues to the Social Security Trust Fund were used to purchase special issue Treasury bonds, to be redeemed later when benefit obligations exceed revenues. After the bond purchase, Social Security lent cash to the federal government to use to help finance its day-to-day operations. Now with the Social Security surplus under virtual lock and key, agencies are warning federal employees that they might face layoffs and the programs they work on may be gutted because of the drastic reductions required to stay under the caps.

Nevertheless, the budget resolution passed the House by a vote of 221-208, on March 25.

Whether the budget caps should be lifted and whether the Social Security part of the budget surplus should not be used to fund the important work of the federal government are two extremely important public policy questions that the President and lawmakers continue to consider.

### **7. *Across-the-Board Cuts: Protecting the Important Work of Government #2 (549)***

AFGE strongly opposed the District of Columbia/Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Conference Report (H.R. 3064) because it included an across-the-board cut affecting all agencies of almost 1.0 percent. Across-the-board cuts are categorically wrong because they allow lawmakers to dramatically reduce the services provided by federal employees without making any attempt to understand the consequences for those Americans who rely on the government, or even to distinguish vital and effective programs from those which may need closer Congressional scrutiny. Americans, including AFGE members, expect their lawmakers to take the time and the effort to make the right decisions on how agencies should be funded, rather than mindlessly slash appropriations bills.

Nevertheless, House lawmakers approved the conference report, including a 0.97 percent across-the-board spending cut, by a vote of 218-211, on October 28.

Lawmakers in favor of the across-the-board cuts pretended they were necessary in order to avoid using Social Security revenue for general government operations, even though *The New York Times*, among others, reminds us that “spending some Social Security money would have no direct effect on the retirement system’s long-term financial condition and little or no economic impact. But it has immense political significance...”

Although the Congressional Republican leadership was ultimately forced to back down from 1.0 percent, the final budget agreement did include across-the-board cuts of 0.38 percent. And, despite the strong opposition of AFGE, it also included a pay delay for federal employees who would normally be paid on September 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000, to forego their paychecks until October 1 (although the funds would not be available in banks until October 2<sup>nd</sup>). Although not as damaging as earlier versions that had been floated, this cynical mandate essentially requires affected federal employees to lend the government their pay so that the cost of that end-of-the-fiscal year paycheck can be pushed into the next fiscal year.

As National President Bobby L. Harnage, Sr., wrote in a letter to lawmakers prior to the vote,

“Like many other Americans, federal employees live from paycheck to paycheck. It is unreasonable for the Congress to fail to pay federal employees in a timely manner for the services they have provided to the American people. The expectation that federal employees should be required to lend their pay—for even a few days—is unfair and unnecessary.”

## **8. District of Columbia: Extending to Washingtonians the Rights Held by Other Americans (345)**

AFGE has consistently supported the longstanding effort to extend to residents of the District of Columbia the same voting rights as those enjoyed by residents of the fifty states. That's why AFGE supported the amendment offered by Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) to strike language in the District of Columbia Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2587) that would have barred the use of federal funds or local tax revenues to seek a court ruling on District of Columbia voting representation. However, the Norton amendment failed by a vote of 214-214, on July 29. Since an amendment must meet with approval of a majority to pass, a tie is as bad as a loss.

The defeat of the Norton Amendment means that the constitutional protections and congressional voting representation of residents of the District of Columbia continue to be less than those of the fifty states. Passage of H.R. 2587 prevents the District government from using its own or federal funds to challenge this injustice in a court of law, adding injury to insult. AFGE will continue to support efforts to obtain representational parity for District residents.

## **9. Ergonomics Regulations: Ensuring Safe and Healthy Workplaces (366)**

AFGE opposed legislation (H.R. 987) that would have prevented the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from issuing new ergonomics rules until the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has completed a congressionally mandated study on the issue. Last year, the Congress authorized funds for an NAS study on the scientific evidence regarding ergonomics, but allowed OSHA to move forward with the development and issuance of a standard to prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as back injuries and carpal tunnel syndrome. It made sense to move on both fronts since an NAS study could take several years to complete. In fact, an earlier NAS report, Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders, found that workers exposed to ergonomic hazards have a higher level of pain, injury, and disability; that there is a strong biological basis for these injuries; and that there are interventions possible to prevent these injuries.

MSDs caused by ergonomic hazards are the biggest safety and health problem in the workplace today, accounting for nearly one-third of all serious job-related injuries. In 1996, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 650,000 workers suffered serious workplace injuries caused by repetitive motion and overexertion. These injuries are serious, disabling, and costly. One type of MSD---carpal tunnel syndrome---results in workers' losing more time from their jobs than any other type of injury, even amputations. The workers' compensation costs of these injuries is estimated at \$20 billion annually; the overall costs are estimated at \$60 billion. Ergonomic injuries are a major problem across every sector of the economy. Nurses, cashiers, assembly line workers, computer users, truck drivers, stock handlers, sewing machine operators, construction workers, and meat cutters are among those most at risk.

Despite strong opposition from AFGE and the rest of the labor movement, the legislation passed the House by a vote of 217-209, on August 3. Fortunately, the legislation has not yet been taken up by the Senate.

#### ***10. Patients' Bill of Rights: Enhancing Health Care for All Americans (490)***

AFGE supported passage of the Managed Care Protection Act (H.R. 2723) because, although a small step, the legislation would have enhanced health care for all Americans. H.R. 2723 would have ensured that health plans covered emergency care without prior authorization and regardless of whether the emergency facility is in the network when a "prudent layperson" could reasonably believe he or she required emergency care. The bill would have required health plans to provide customers with options such as ob-gyn care for women and pediatricians as primary care providers for children. The bill would also have established an internal and external appeals process to review denial of care and to make decisions on care in a timely fashion. Finally, the bill would have permitted patients or their estates to sue their health plan in state courts when they made negligent decisions that resulted in injury or death of patients.

The House passed H.R. 2723 by a vote of 275-151, on October 7. The text of H.R. 2723 was then added to another health care bill (H.R. 2990), which in turn was taken up by a House-Senate conference at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress. The outlook for the legislation is uncertain.



	Fair Trade	FEHBP	Veterans Health	Tax Cut #1	Tax Cut #2	Across-the-Board Cuts #1	Across-the-Board Cuts #2	D.C. Rights	Ergonomics	Patients' Bill of Rights	AFGE SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>California (cont.)</b>											
Eshoo (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Farr (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Filner (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Galleghy (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Herger (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Horn (R)	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	50%
Hunter (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Kuykendall (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Lantos (D)	R	R	?	R	?	R	R	R	?	R	100%
Lee (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Lewis, Jerry (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Lofgren (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Martinez (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Matsui (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
McKeon (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Millender-McDonald (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Miller, George (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Miller, Gary (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Napolitano (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Ose (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
* Packard (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Pelosi (D)	R	R	R	R	R	?	R	R	R	R	100%
Pombo (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Radanovich (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Rogan (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Rohrabacher (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Roybal-Allard (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Royce (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Sanchez (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Sherman (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Stark (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Tauscher (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Thomas, B. (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Thompson, M. (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Waters (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	?	R	R	R	100%
Waxman (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Woolsey (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
<b>Colorado</b>											
DeGette (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Hefley (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	30%



	Fair Trade	FEHBP	Veterans Health	Tax Cut #1	Tax Cut #2	Across-the-Board Cuts #1	Across-the-Board Cuts #2	D.C. Rights	Ergonomics	Patients' Bill of Rights	AFGE SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>Georgia</b>											
Barr (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Bishop (D)	R	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Chambliss (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	10%
Collins, M. (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Deal (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Isakson (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Kingston (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Lewis, John (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Linder (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
McKinney (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Norwood (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
<b>Hawaii</b>											
Abercrombie (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Mink (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
<b>Idaho</b>											
* Chenoweth-Hage (R)	R	?	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	22%
Simpson (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
<b>Illinois</b>											
Biggert (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Blagojevich (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Costello (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Crane (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Davis, D. (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Evans (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
* Ewing (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Gutierrez (D)	R	R	R	R	?	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Hastert (R)	S	S	S	W	W	W	W	S	W	W	0%
Hyde (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	10%
Jackson, J. (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
LaHood (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	10%
Lipinski (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	80%
Manzullo (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Phelps (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
* Porter (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Rush (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	?	R	R	R	100%
Schakowsky (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Shimkus (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
Weller (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	20%















	Fair Trade	FEHBP	Veterans Health	Tax Cut #1	Tax Cut #2	Across-the-Board Cuts #1	Across-the-Board Cuts #2	D.C. Rights	Ergonomics	Patients' Bill of Rights	AFGE SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>Texas (cont.)</b>											
Ortiz (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Paul (R)	W	W	W	W	W	?	R	W	W	W	11%
Reyes (D)	R	R	R	R	?	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Rodriguez (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Sandlin (D)	R	R	?	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Sessions, P. (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	10%
Smith, Lamar (R)	W	W	W	W	W	?	W	W	W	W	0%
Stenholm (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	70%
Thornberry (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	10%
Turner (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	80%
<b>Utah</b>											
Cannon (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Cook (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	20%
Hansen (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	10%
<b>Vermont</b>											
Sanders (I)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
<b>Virginia</b>											
Bateman (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	10%
Bliley (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Boucher (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	90%
Davis, T. (R)	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	30%
Goode (D)	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	20%
Goodlatte (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Moran, James (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Pickett (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	80%
Scott (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Sisisky (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	90%
Wolf (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	20%
<b>Washington</b>											
Baird (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Dicks (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Dunn (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Hastings, D. (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Inslee (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
McDermott (D)	W	?	R	?	?	R	R	?	?	R	80%
* Metcalf (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	?	W	11%
Nethercutt (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Smith, Adam (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	R	70%

	Fair Trade	FEHBP	Veterans Health	Tax Cut #1	Tax Cut #2	Across-the-Board Cuts #1	Across-the-Board Cuts #2	D.C. Rights	Ergonomics	Patients' Bill of Rights	AFGE SCORE
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>West Virginia</b>											
Mollohan (D)	R	W	R	R	?	R	R	R	?	R	87%
Rahall (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Wise (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
<b>Wisconsin</b>											
Baldwin (D)	R	?	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Barrett, T. (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Green, M. (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Kind, R. (D)	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Kleczka (D)	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	90%
Obey (D)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Petri (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	20%
Ryan, P. (R)	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	20%
Sensenbrenner (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
<b>Wyoming</b>											
Cubin (R)	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	10%

KEY
<b>R</b> Voted Right
<b>W</b> Voted Wrong
<b>?</b> Did Not Vote
* Retiring or Seeking Other Office
<b>S</b> Speaker Exercised Discretion Not to Vote