Good afternoon,

I want to update you on recent events you may have heard concerning President Trump’s Executive Orders, issued on May 25, 2018, attacking our Union.  Secretary Wilkie has decided to implement these Executive Orders, which we believe are unlawful.  The unlawful Executive Orders are intended to limit the Union’s ability to function by removing most of our official time, precluding our use of outlook (government email) to communicate with members, and evicting us from our offices (Room B-30 at 810 Vermont Ave and Room 2E414 at 425 I Street).

Local 17’s Executive Board has developed a plan to continue operating until the Executive Orders are rescinded.  First, our website <https://www.afge.org/local/l0017/> will be used to notify all members of events, important news, and meetings, including monthly membership meetings.  We plan on hiring someone to manage the site.  When an important item is posted on our site, you will be notified via email to check the website.  Second, we will propose changing our bylaws to allow Bill Wetmore, who recently retired from VA, to run our daily operations.  Many locals are paying business agents over $50,000 a year to run their daily operations.  Bill Wetmore can do a better job with a modest stipend.  Third, we will be communicating with you via off-site lunch and learns – one near 810 Vermont Ave and one near 425 I Street – as well as a teleconference call.  And finally, our new email is vacoafgelocal17@gmail.com.

We hope that you continue to support our Union.  AFGE is the largest federal labor union in the country, representing over 700,000 federal employees.  And while the unlawful Executive Orders will interfere with representation at the local level, AFGE is still a powerful force fighting for your rights.  For example, the 3.1 percent pay increase we received for 2020, the 12 weeks of paid parental leave for all federal employees, negotiating with management over the impact of the Coronavirus, and maintaining our retirement benefits which are constantly under attack are primarily the result of the dues we send to AFGE.  In other words, we are all receiving many benefits from AFGE.

In addition, Local 17 stewards will continue to meet and represent employees.  James Dyer has a private office at 1800 G Street; stewards can arrange for meeting space at 810 Vermont Ave; and Calanit Kedem, JR Cummings, Marla Woodarek, Steve Eckerman, Nick Keogh, and I have private offices at 425 I Street.  I am willing to meet any employee for lunch at the Corner Bakery, on the corner of 6th and H Street, NW (Chinatown).  That’s my new union office.  LOL.

Our next membership meeting will be held this Thursday, March 12, from 12:00 to 12:45 p.m., in room 528 at 810 Vermont Ave, NW.

Regards,

Doug

Douglas E. Massey, Esq.

President

AFGE Local 17