

AFGE



2nd DISTRICT

AFGE 2nd DISTRICT

NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT, MAINE, VERMONT, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, RHODE ISLAND

Vol. 1 No. 43 February 2018

Locals Attend Multi-District Training



The 2nd District co-hosted training in October with the 3rd District (PA and DE). The training was held in the beautiful Poconos in eastern PA. Courses offered included OWCP (Workers Comp), Financial Officer training, Litigation, Basic Representation, Collective Bargaining and the Statute. Above is a photo of 2nd District's attendees including NVP Castellano (center).

ALERT!!

Do you know that AFLAC is now available to our members? More information inside this issue!

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*Please submit
newsletter input and
comments
to
robin.johnson@afge.org!*

2018 Legislative Conference

*February 11-14, 2018
Hyatt Regency Washington D.C.*

AFGE reps like yourself arrive en masse every February to learn and to emphasize federal workers' legislative needs to Congress.

Some of the key topics for 2018 include: the Federal budget; compensation, healthcare & retirement; privatization and conversions of work; due process; and official time.

Lawmakers will speak to our members at a breakfast at the Capitol Visitors' Center on the 13th. A full agenda of LegCon activities has been provided to our Locals. Registration information is available on afge.org.

Many AFGE Councils, Steering Groups, and Committees take the opportunity to access their members at the conference. Some that have planned meetings, trainings and activities are: DEFCON; CIS Council 119; Y.O.U.N.G.; TSA Council 100; VA Council; DeCA Council 172; SSA Council 220; Bureau of Prisons Council 33; and ICE Council 118.

It is critical that our members and Locals be politically active all year round, at home and in D.C. Locals that need help with this should contact their National Rep or the District office.

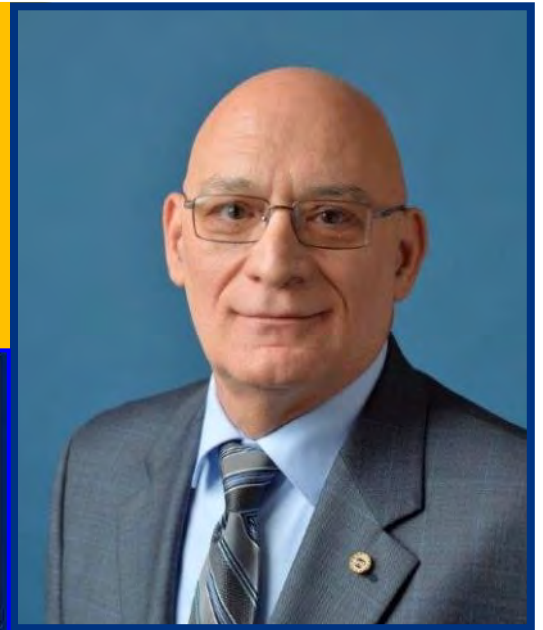
Grassroots Legislative and Political Action is key to success EVERY DAY, in D.C. and at home!

Legislative and Political Action should never be done on duty or using government equipment such as phones, computers, fax machines, etc. For more information please see afge.org, as well as Hatch Act materials on opm.gov.

LP3342 Shawn Halloran met with Congressman Gerry Connelly at LegCon 2017. Connelly backed a significant proposed pay raise for Feds. Among other positions, he is currently a senior member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and serves on the Subcommittee on Government Operations.



NVP NOTES



Plans for a Busy and Productive 2018



Greetings!

I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays. We have a lot to accomplish together in 2018!

The National Executive Council (NEC) is resolved to making 2018 a year of action. We're asking all our members to pledge to make regular phone calls to lawmakers, sign up 2 new AFGE members, and take actions as needed that will be identified on afge.org. Will you help us meet this goal so that together we can overcome the challenges and threats facing Federal employees?

To grow our union Big Enough to Win we need every member to participate. The strength of AFGE, indeed the strength of organized Labor, comes directly from the members. Actively involved members support strong leaders and become strong leaders themselves. Strong leaders and members make for effective Locals that get things done. Please take the time to read the article in this issue about what else makes effective Locals. It all begins with you!

I know our Locals have also been busy at the start of the year. Besides dealing with furloughs due to lapsed appropriations and representing employees, they have as usual been getting members' approval of their annual budget, auditing the previous year's financial records, submitting required reports to the IRS and DOL, and making strategic plans for the new year. Please let your assigned National Representative (NR) know if you need assistance with these or other matters.

Some important events in 2018 include the Legislative Conference in February, District meetings in June, and the National Convention in August. I encourage all our members and Locals to participate in those and other events such as conferences and trainings, etc. They are critical to our success. But just as important are the day to day activities. The representation, the organizing, the Local meetings and social events, a letter to the editor, a call to elected representatives—it all adds up and is essential to our strength and combined success.

Thank you for all that you do.

In Solidarity,
NVP Castellano



New Benefit: AFLAC!



From left to right: Lynn Coutlee, BA; NR Tim McLaughlin; NO Francis Thompson; acting LP2138 Suzanne Texiera; NO Indira Mohan-Varas; NR Theresa Impink, and Bob Torres, BA. And in front, of course—The AFLAC duck!!

Everyone loves AFLAC! Well, AFGE now offers its members superior AFLAC coverage at lower rates than available elsewhere!

Locals should coordinate with their NR's and Benefit Architects (BA) to get specifics out to their membership!

BA also offers our members short-term disability insurance and life insurance more desirable than FEGLI.

Note: Due to NYS regulations and the value of benefits being offered through AFGE vs other sources, there is a slight delay in making AFLAC available to our members in NYS. It's in the works and will be available soon!

Life Insurance is now available to ALL AFGE members!

Transamerica Life Insurance is a NEW product that is:

1. Guaranteed issue: No medical questions other than "Do you smoke?"
2. An individual policy: you own it!
3. Portable: You take it with you if you change jobs, move etc.
4. Available with a death benefit of \$25,000 to \$150,000.
5. Guaranteed not to increase cost or decrease benefit to age 100.
6. Guaranteed to build cash value with interest rate of 4%.
7. Complete with long term care to match the death benefit value. You can use LTC at a rate of 4% a month for 25 months. If you need more you can then use Life Death benefit at 4% for another 25 months. If you use both up, Trans will issue a paid up \$25K life policy. Children can be added up to \$20,000 for \$2.30 a paycheck. At age 25 kids then choose a life policy for up to 5 times the value of their child policy with no medical questions. Spouses can also be covered.

AFGE.ORG

Major tabs on the AFGE website: About Us; Member Benefits; Leaders & Activists; Media Center; Take Action; and Contact Us. Each page has a link to the AFGE Constitution. Check out afge.org and make the most of YOUR membership!

Check it out!

Local Averts Agency Attempt to Contract Out

By James Dean, President, AFGE Local 2930

Local 2930 represents approximately 200 Wage Grade and GS employees at the US Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, on the Canadian border of New York State. L2930 recently prevented the Agency from contracting out positions and influenced the decision to advertise for the vacant positions. Although the positions were outside the bargaining unit, Local 2930 and its members acted in the best interests of federal employees and the taxpayer in protecting our work.

In July 2017 the Local became aware of the Agency's intent to contract out services previously performed by a federal employee. The position had recently become vacant. The Agency chose not to advertise the vacancy, instead requesting higher headquarters approval and making other preparations for contracting out the work.

The Local researched information pertaining to the checklist and scope of work for the contract, position descriptions, staffing plans, and costs. This led to the determination that the Agency was using an outdated Army checklist, and the contractor would cost four times as much as a federal employee. Application of the proper checklist showed that the proposed contracting out was prohibited.

The Local informed the Agency of its findings and concerns, but the Agency argued that they had an exception to the prohibition. At this point the Local contacted the 2nd District and AFGE National staff for assistance. They advised that the Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) should be made aware of the situation, and that it would be best if he heard it from Army employees, so on August 9 the Local wrote to make him aware of the situation.

A response was received on August 10, an astonishing one-day turnaround. The ASA responded that DoD policy and statutory interpretation prohibits work designated for in-house government performance from being transferred to contractors. The ASA office requested contact information of the persons involved in the decision so they could discuss it with them. On August 30 the Local was asked to identify specifically (i.e., by job title, position description, TDA line, and UIC) which in-house positions would be adversely impacted by the proposed contract. About September 19th, the Agency notified the Local that the contracting out effort was dead and that a term vacancy was being advertised. Although a permanent position would have been preferable, a bargaining unit Employee was grateful for the opportunity to compete for the position. The ASA wrote that they are always happy to be of assistance. In my opinion this could not have happened without the full support of the employees, NVP Castellano and the AFGE staff.

Editor's Note: This success story also shows how, despite the current Administration's prohibition on labor-management forums, Agencies and the Union can work together to ensure better outcomes for both. In this case the Agency would have been in violation of its own policies and others and would have spent 4 times as much money, had the Union not shared its concerns for the good of all.

AFGE Activists in Action!



SSA Local 3369 took part in the Labor Day parade in NYC. From left to right: NR Tim McLaughlin, Elizabeth Miranda, Jessica Garces, and Alberto Garces.



The signs held by these activists at Local 862 tell some of the many reasons to rally on behalf of the VA. Locals can obtain signage from AFGE HQ. For assistance, contact your NR.

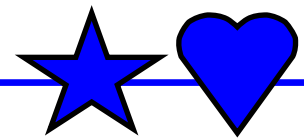


Instead of filling the 49,000 + vacancies in the VA to ensure good care for our nation's heroes, Congress has focused on making it easier to fire VA workers.

Across our nation and across our District, AFGE has been actively rallying in support of our nation's veterans and the superior care they receive from the VA.

Left, Local 2094 President George Jones, L1988 President Ena Thompson Judd, L2695 President Selina Grant, and L862 President Cheryl Jones tirelessly stand up for VA Employees and the veterans they serve.

afge.org



Afge.org is the place to go to get the most from your AFGE membership!

While you're there, please update your profile to include a nongovernment phone and email address where you can be reached. Much key information cannot be sent to you on government equipment.

Log in today to see the newest information on current Federal employee and labor issues, as well as your moneysaving benefits and much, MUCH more information pertinent to you and your career.

To obtain text alerts from AFGE, text AFGE to 225568 from your PERSONAL (not government) phone.



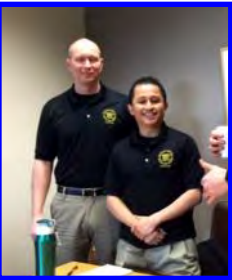
Arbitration Success

Local 2266 represents Border Patrol employees in the Swanton sector in northern VT and NY.

The Local recently won a second consecutive arbitration regarding safety equipment. The arbitrator ordered a return to status quo ante and that affected Employees be made whole. Award of attorney's fees is pending determination of the amount.

This case involved the Agency's failure to bargain over implementation of changes in cold weather uniform policy. As a result, agents were working in harsh conditions absent approved personal protective equipment.

Notably, in his decision the arbitrator referenced the Local's previous win. He stated: *"The ATV case parallels the current dispute. Both involve managerial decisions. Both involve an established practice. Both involve conditions of employment. Both now result in a finding of a violation of law and contract."*



Kudos to the Local leadership including LP Sean Walsh and Treasurer Chris Porras (left) for relentlessly upholding contract and statute to ensure the safety of their bargaining unit members who perform critical national security missions.



Retired members from Local 3428 were among those at the Local's annual Holiday party. L3428 represents EPA Employees in Region 1. Photo submitted by Carol Kilbride, Retiree Coordinator for New England.



2018 AFGE National Convention

13-17 August 2018, Las Vegas, NV

Locals should prepare now to participate! See the Events Calendar on afge.org for details, and watch for details on how to submit resolutions for consideration by the whole of AFGE.

Delegates at the 2015 Convention adopted the following definition of strong, effective Locals. Strong Effective Locals:

1) Have Leaders, including:

- Elected Officers as required by their Constitution and By-Laws, with a different person in each position;
- Union representatives and stewards, including Women's and Fair Practices Coordinators, YOUNG Coordinators and Local Political Coordinators;
- Activists and volunteers who are: Trained; Inclusive and representative of the bargaining unit in all its diversity, including different facilities, unit, job series, age, race, sex, etc.; and <content not displayed, please see afge.org/globalassets/documents/adopted-resolutions.pdf>.

2) Members:

- The Local has organizing and retention plans;
- A minimum of 50% of the bargaining unit employees are members;
- A significant number of members are active, including calling their member of Congress, volunteering for Local committees, recruiting new members, participating in Local meetings and activities; and
- <content not displayed, please see afge.org/globalassets/documents/adopted-resolutions.pdf>.

3) Represent their members:

- a. Through the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), including: Timely bargaining; Training; Enforcement; and Monitoring contracting out.
- b. Through third parties, including: FLRA-PERB; EEOC; MSPB-OEA; OPM; OSC; DOL.

4) Meet their financial responsibilities:

- a. With an adequate dues structure providing funds to: Pay per capita; Participate in LAF; and Accomplish what is necessary to be a Strong Effective Local (1-6).
- b. With sound financial reporting and practices, including: Annual budgets approved by the members; The timely filing of DOL and IRS forms; Annual audits conducted; Monthly treasurer reports; and Properly bonded.

5) Participate:

- Through mobilization for: Legislative action, including lobbying; Political action; and workplace issues.
- In AFGE events, trainings, conventions, caucuses and meetings at the National, District, and, if applicable, Council levels;
- In state and local central labor councils; and
- In the community.

6) Communicate and Educate: To and from their members; To all bargaining unit employees; To allies; To the community; and with AFGE national, including through MYLocal and Personify.

What is YOUR role in making your Local strong and effective?
Our members ARE the Union!

AFGE Retirees

Retirees have more time to help fight to protect pensions, benefits, and the services Feds provide!

Retirement from Federal service doesn't mean you need to lose your Union benefits, camaraderie and power!



2nd District Retiree Coordinator Allen Chopik and Local 491 retiree Carra Stone rally for the Bath VA.



AFGE Retiree Program Director Julie Tippens (left) and assistant James Harley (right) met with 2nd District Retiree Coordinators Allen Chopik and Carol Kilbride for training.



Rita R. Mason, President of the District Retiree and At-Large Local, stays actively involved in political action and with the AFL-CIO.

Retirees pay lower dues and keep their moneysaving benefits!

Buy Union!

Whether you're watching football or NASCAR or just hanging out, it pays to support Union-made products!

Chips & Dips

- Breakstone Sour Cream
- Dan Dee Pretzels
- Dodger's hot dogs
- Evans Food Products
- Frank's Red Hot
- Frito Lay
- Hidden Valley Ranch
- Kraft/Heinz Cornuts
- Old El Paso chips, dips, salsa
- Pace Salsa
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese
- Tostitos Chips & Salsa
- Totino's Pizza & Pizza Rolls
- Velveeta
- Wise Potato Chips

Main Dishes & Sides

- Alexander & Hornung
- Always Tender
- Ball Park
- Banquet
- Butterball
- Citterio USA (Italian meats)
- Dearborn Sausage Co
- Farmer John
- Farmland
- Hebrew National
- Hormel
- Omaha Steaks
- Oscar Meyer
- Tyson
- B&M Baked Beans

Beer

- Bass Pale Ale
- Beck's
- Blue Moon
- Budweiser
- Busch
- Goose Island
- Keystone Light
- Killian's
- Labatt Blue
- Miller
- Molson Canadian
- O'Doul's
- Red Tail Ale
- Sam Adams
- Schlitz..... *and more!*

AFGE 2nd District



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AFGE District 2 Y O U N G



Vanessa Barrow
2nd District Y.O.U.N.G.
Coordinator

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Committee members gifted backpacks to young children hospitalized in San Jorge Children's Hospital.



Members of the National AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Committee, including 2nd District Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinator Vanessa Barrow & Member at Large Jennifer Ramirez Young delivered book bags and school supplies to children in San Jorge Children's Hospital in San Juan Puerto Rico.



District Coordinators Vincent Blasingame (5th District) & Vanessa Barrow (2nd).



YOUNG members ready to assemble backpacks with the assistance of Women's & Fair Practices NVP Augusta Thomas and 3rd District NVP Phil Glover!



2nd District At Large Member Jennifer Ramirez



Jennifer Ramirez and future unionist Jamie. This young man is following in his mother's footsteps!



Union stewards and officers attending the HRT took part in many different trainings. These trainings enrich and educate your Union officials' knowledge base so they can be better officers. To the left are attendees of the Workplace Bullying training, including Jennifer Ramirez.



Alberto Garces, Jessica Garces, Elizabeth Miranda, Aracelis Alvelo in the NYC Labor Day parade.



Locals 1118 and 2094 representatives rally in support of the VA at Montrose. L to R: Ruth Parker, Kim Freeman, Kevin Lapham, Marcellus Shields, NR Theresa Impink, and Ena Judd Thompson.



Members of AFGE L491 and the American Legion Auxiliary rally at Bath NY. Left, LP491 Richard Howard, NR Robin Johnson, and EVP Tammy Holbrook.

FINANCIAL OFFICERS'



Sound financial management is imperative for all Locals so that legal obligations are met and members' money is properly used and accounted for.

For example, each Local must perform an annual audit and account to the IRS and DOL on its income and expenditures, by category. AFGE offers Financial Officers Training on a regular basis to assist Locals in meeting these and other obligations. Every Treasurer and Local President needs this class, and we advise that every member of the Executive Board take it as well to understand their fiduciary responsibilities.

The training is offered both by webinar or in a classroom setting. Currently webinars are scheduled for the following 2018 dates: Feb 20-22; April 24-26; Jun 19-21; Sep 11-13, and Oct 23-25. Classes will also be held at AFGE HQ in Washington D.C. as follows: Jan 22-25; Mar 19-22; May 21-24; and Jul 23-26.

This training may be offered at other times, such as at District or Multi-District trainings. For more Information check the Events calendar on afge.org, or Locals may consult their assigned National Representative.



SOME KEY 2018 EVENTS

February

- 11-14, Legislative Conference, Washington D.C.

March 16-19: Legislative Political Training Institute, Indianapolis IN.

2nd District Pre-Convention Meetings

May 30, Hilton Meadowland hotel, East Rutherford NJ.

June 5, Holiday Inn, Liverpool (Syracuse) NY.

June 7, Portsmouth Harbor Events Center, Portsmouth NH.

August

- Aug 13-17, AFGE National Convention, Las Vegas NV

NEC Meetings

February 15

May 7-11

August 9

December 3-6

For more information go to afge.org/events, or contact your National Representative.



David Gonzalez, AFGE National Representative assigned to the 2nd District, was recently honored as the Community Activist of the Year by a coalition of NJ governmental and civic organizations.

The award was presented at an annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration, the theme of which was "Service today for a better tomorrow." David certainly personifies that slogan both in his community and as an NR with over 20 years of Local leadership and experience. Well done, David, and thank you for all you do!

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Visit our website: www.afgedistrict2.org

Like us on Facebook: AFGE 2nd District

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