



# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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

November/December 2013

Vol. LXXX, No 6

## When Congress shut down the government... AFGE sprang into action

**T**he American Federation of Government Employees was on the front lines of the battle against the government shutdown. AFGE members let their voices be heard in so many ways, including:

- Hundreds of rallies and protest actions across the nation, from Tacoma, Wash., to Puerto Rico
- Teleconference town hall meetings with more than 25,000 members dialing in each week
- Phone calls to members of Congress using AFGE's special toll-free hotline
- Hundreds of interviews with local and national media to explain the harmful effects of the shutdown

*Look inside on pages 4 and 5 for a recap of AFGE's response to the lockout.*

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## A Message from AFGE's National President J. David Cox Sr.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I want to thank you all for the incredible work you did to bring an end to this shutdown.

Everything you accomplished in winning this fight was unprecedented: you held more than 200 rallies, did more than 450 TV interviews, and were quoted in the media over 1,400 times. You participated in town halls by the tens of thousands, delivered thousands of calls to your legislators, and held dozens of face-to-face meetings with members of Congress.

There is not a doubt in my mind that it was YOUR WORK that ended this shutdown.

But I'm not interested in looking backwards, brothers and sisters. We may have won this battle, but it was just one skirmish in a much longer war. Government funding will expire in just a matter of weeks and members of Congress will have to negotiate a solution in the meantime. Though it will be tempting to sit on the sidelines and see what turns up, we cannot afford to stand back from this fight. Not for one moment.

You can bet your bottom dollar that politicians are going to dust off the same old attacks on your jobs, pay, and benefits. You can bet they'll offer you as the ransom paid for a long-term budget agreement. And you can bet they haven't learned their lesson from the shutdown!

***If we are to stop the relentless attacks on federal employees, we need to build a movement that is big enough to win. And I don't just want to win these skirmishes; we need to win the war against federal employees. The way to do it? GROW THIS MOVEMENT.***

We need one million federal workers standing up and saying ENOUGH! Enough of the pay freezes. Enough of the benefit cuts. Enough of the furloughs. We are many, we are strong, and we will not take it anymore!

We all saw what 300,000 motivated AFGE members were able to accomplish by ending the shutdown. The time to push our advantage is NOW. We need to keep growing the membership, engage like-minded people and groups in our communities, visit our members of Congress, work with our local media, and prepare to deliver a decisive blow to anyone who tries to cross federal employees.

The time has come for federal employees to stand up and demand what you have earned. You get up and go to work every day to make this country a better place and you deserve to be respected for it. Let's stand together, march in step, and take back what is rightfully ours!

In Solidarity

### AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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## News Conference Highlights Critically Low Staffing, Funding Levels in BOP



Eric Young, J. David Cox, Sr., Don Williams, Terry Rivera

**A**FGE's Council of Prison Locals held a press conference at the National Press Club to speak out against dangerously low staffing and funding levels in the Bureau of Prisons. Speakers included family members of three slain correctional officers. Jose Rivera, killed in 2008 by two inmates with homemade weapons at the U.S. Penitentiary Atwater in California, was represented by his mother, Terry. Don Williams spoke for his son, Eric Williams, who was killed in February while working at the U.S. Penitentiary Canaan in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Oswaldo Albarati, who was killed in February in an ambush attack while he was driving home from the Metropolitan

Detention Center Guaynabo in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was represented by wife, Helen Andujar.

The council also called on Congress to provide immediate funding relief to BOP and addressed the impact of the government shutdown. BOP correctional officers were deemed essential and were required to work during the shutdown but were not paid during that time.

To watch the press conference in its entirety, please visit: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=1SjG0qeVDDI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1SjG0qeVDDI)

## Eric Young Elected as President of AFGE BOP Council



**A**FGE's Council of Prison Locals recently elected Eric Young as president during its convention in Hollywood, Fla. Young, a Gulf War Army veteran, previously served as president of AFGE Local 501 in Miami, Fla., for seven years and CPL southeast regional vice president for six years. CPL represents more than 30,000 bargaining unit employees in the United States and Puerto Rico and is made up of workers from virtually all levels of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

"Eric Young is a great labor activist and veteran and we are excited to work with him as we continue fighting to protect all BOP workers," said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. "Federal correctional workers put their lives on the line each and every day and deserve the necessary protections to remain safe on the job."

(from cover)

## AFGE Members Stepped up When Government Shut Down

The faction of House members who decided to hold the federal government hostage in a battle over Obamacare certainly underestimated the collective voice of AFGE members. You took to the streets, the airwaves and the steps of the Capitol to protest the government shutdown and make the case that federal employees not only wanted to work, but deserved to work.

AFGE locals held hundreds of rallies, protests and informational pickets to protest the lockout. AFGE partnered with the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and his organization, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, to raise the profile of our protest actions in locations including Chicago, New York and Washington.

AFGE's National Headquarters organized rallies on Capitol Hill that drew dozens of lawmakers from the Congressional Progressive Caucus, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, generating substantial

media attention. Meanwhile, AFGE members rallied outside military bases, VA hospitals, Social Security offices, federal plazas and congressional offices across the country.

In addition, more than 25,000 of you called in to each of our teleconference town hall meetings to hear the latest on the government shutdown from AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. and to get your questions answered.

AFGE leaders and activists fielded hundreds of media calls in response to the government lockout. Union members shared their stories via local and national news outlets to illustrate the impact of the shutdown.

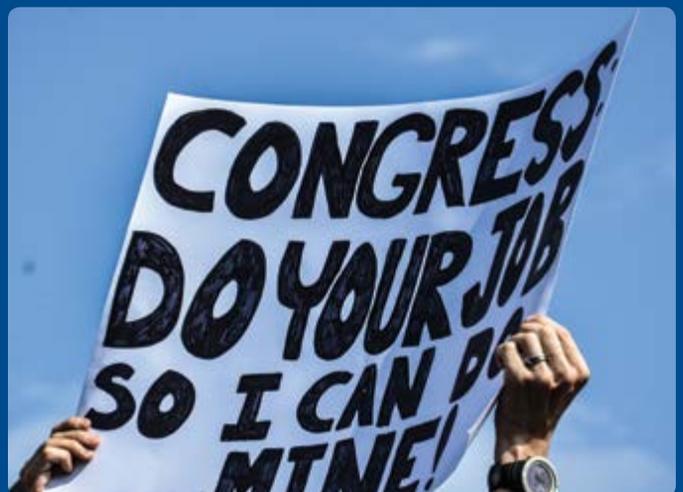
AFGE staff also worked hard to make sure members had the latest information on the shutdown, including guidance on complying with furlough notices, resources for filing unemployment claims, and financial assistance programs available to workers impacted by the shutdown. All of this information was made available online through a special "Lockout Central" page on the AFGE website.



Reverend Jesse Jackson



House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi





# Over 200 AFGE Rallies Nationwide



## M&O Launches Ground Game during Lockout

During the government lockout, the Membership and Organization Department turned up the heat by helping local leaders and activists organize rallies and civil protests to put pressure on Congress to end the lockout.

Organizers assisted with securing permits for rallies and protests and scheduled visits for AFGE local activists and rank and file employees at the home district offices of their congressional representatives.

Many of the protests were done in front of federal facilities and congressional members' district offices. The rallies helped increase AFGE's visibility during the lockout and spread federal employees' "WE WANT TO WORK" message to the public.

After Congress passed legislation that ensured that employees would get paid, organizers held phone banks and used social media alert employees. Organizers also encouraged members to recruit new members to the union and join the fight.

## Federal Budget 101 with Legislative Director Beth Moten

Sometimes I get asked what would happen if the Congress stopped being so divided and returned to “regular order.” Well, brothers and sisters, it’s been a long time, but I can still remember what that would look like for federal employees.

In a normal world (which I haven’t seen in several years), the House of Representatives would pass a budget resolution which sets out discretionary and mandatory spending targets and tax levels. The Senate would pass one, too. Then they would meet in conference and resolve their differences, and then each chamber would go back and pass the compromised version of the budget resolution. This is not a bill, but a non-binding resolution, so it doesn’t go to the president for a signature. It’s just a working document for the Congress.

In particular, the budget resolution tells the appropriations committees how much money they can spend for all **discretionary spending** (agency funding). The appropriations committees come up with allocations for each subcommittee (ideally, both the House and Senate have the same allocation per subcommittee) then each subcommittee spends it on agency programs the way it thinks is best. The bill from each subcommittee gets passed through committee, goes to the House or Senate floor for passage, and then goes to conference with the other chamber’s bill.

Those bills are binding and go to the president for signature or veto.

If the Congress cannot get their appropriations bills passed and signed into law before the end of the fiscal year (Sept. 30), then they write a “continuing resolution” (CR) which is really short and just requires federal

agencies to remain open, usually at the same level of appropriations as they had the previous fiscal year. So, for example, if a federal agency got \$10 million in fiscal year 2012, the CR would allow them to spend at a level equivalent to the \$10 million annual figure for the duration of the CR. The CR is designed so that everything in the federal agencies keeps going normally while the Congress and the White House resolve their differences in how agencies would spend the next fiscal year’s money.

The other part of the budget resolution is the mandatory spending (entitlements) and taxes section. The budget resolution tells the authorizing committees and the tax committees (House Ways and Means and Senate Finance) what amount of money they have to achieve in savings or revenue increases. This process is called “reconciliation,” because those agencies have to reconcile their programs with the requirements imposed by the budget resolution. For example, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee could be required by the budget resolution to come up with \$60 billion in savings from the programs under their committee’s jurisdiction. (The counterpart to the House OGR Committee in the Senate is called Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.)

Since those authorizing committees have virtually no other mandatory programs in their jurisdiction except federal employee retirement benefits or federal retiree health insurance, if they are required to meet a savings target for the budget resolution, the only way is to cut the benefit levels for those programs, or require the employees or retirees to pay more for the benefits.

Anyway, that’s the way the process is supposed to work. But as you know that’s not the way it’s happened with sequestration, furloughs, the shutdown and all the other attacks on federal employees and public services. For the latest on the federal budget, be sure to visit [AFGE.org](http://AFGE.org).

*Beth Moten is the director of AFGE’s Legislative and Political Department.*

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The Government Standard electronically!

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## Health and Safety Training Opportunities for AFGE Locals!

### Grant-funded initiative helps protect federal workers



AFGE members participate in an OSHA refresher course at FAA in Oklahoma City, Okla.

**A**cross the nation, AFGE districts and locals are taking advantage of free health and safety training programs that teach union members how to identify potential hazards and protect themselves on the job.

For several years, AFGE has been a member of a multi-union consortium led by the International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC) Center for Worker Health and Safety Education. The consortium offers a wide range of health and safety training programs from First Aid/CPR to the four-day OSHA Chemical Emergency Response Worker training. The consortium receives grant funding through the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to provide health and safety training for its member unions. The long-term objective of the consortium is to prevent work-related harm by training workers on how to best protect themselves, their

communities and the environment.

This training hits an urgent need for health and safety that often is overlooked by locals who are fighting for federal employees on multiple fronts. In the 5th District, a series of consortium health and safety training programs have been offered at both district and local training events.

Like the 5th District, Federal Aviation Administration Local 2282 has offered several consortium programs and is spreading the word on the effectiveness of its training. Greg Brooks, president of Local 2282, which represents FAA workers in Oklahoma City, agrees with this assessment. “The consortium training is well

worth it.” Earlier this year, Local 2282

coordinated a 10-hour OSHA refresher course with several other AFGE locals, including members from the USDA, VA and Department of Commerce.

A strong and experienced “train-the-trainer” component is integral to all of the AFGE/ICWUC health and safety training programs, with almost all educational staff being former worker trainers. Working in collaboration with AFGE Health and Safety Specialist Milly Rodriguez, ICWUC representative Don Dudley serves as the AFGE coordinator for the consortium training programs. Don brings a wealth of safety and union experience to his work as an instructor and training coordinator. He was a member of the American Flint Glass Workers Union for 25 years where he served as the division chairman, safety chairman, vice president and president of Local 700. For more information on the consortium and how its safety training can help your local, contact Milly Rodriguez at [rodrim@afge.org](mailto:rodrim@afge.org).

## GCO Fighting Sequestration Furloughs

**I**n July and August, attorneys from the AFGE General Counsel’s Office participated in over 60 MSPB appeals workshops across the country. In these workshops GCO attorneys assisted thousands of AFGE members with filing MSPB appeals based on their sequestration furloughs. More than 35,000 appeals were received by the MSPB — the most ever, and the largest single group of MSPB cases since the PATCO strikers were fired.

GCO has filed an appearance in several cases where we’re attempting to have large blocks of individual

appeals considered as a class action, or to have the appeals consolidated in one case. The MSPB, already overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the appeals, ceased most operations due to the government shutdown.

The appeals process resumed as soon as the shutdown ended. If you wrote on your appeal that you wanted it to be considered a class action, contact GCO about your case if you haven’t already heard from an AFGE attorney.

# Shutdown Central: Who Voted to Keep You Locked Out?

## Senators voting to continue shutdown:

Coburn (OK)	Cruz (TX)	Heller (NV)	Paul (KY)	Rubio (FL)	Shelby (AL)
Cornyn (TX)	Enzi (WY)	Johnson (WI)	Risch (ID)	Scott (SC)	Toomey (PA)
Crapo (ID)	Grassley (IA)	Lee (UT)	Roberts (KS)	Sessions (AL)	Vitter (LA)

## Reps. voting to continue shutdown:

Aderholt (AL)	Duncan (SC)	Huizenga (MI)	Mullin (OK)	Ryan (WI)
Amash (MI)	Duncan (TN)	Hultgren (IL)	Mulvaney (SC)	Salmon (AZ)
Amodei (NV)	Ellmers (NC)	Hunter (CA)	Neugebauer (TX)	Sanford (SC)
Bachmann (MN)	Farenthold (TX)	Hurt (VA)	Noem (SD)	Scalise (LA)
Barr (KY)	Fincher (TN)	Johnson (OH)	Nugent (FL)	Schweikert (AZ)
Barton (TX)	Fleischmann (TN)	Johnson, Sam (TX)	Nunnelee (MS)	Scott, Austin (GA)
Bentivolio (MI)	Fleming (LA)	Jones (NC)	Olson (TX)	Sensenbrenner (WI)
Bishop (UT)	Flores (TX)	Jordan (OH)	Palazzo (MS)	Sessions (TX)
Black (TN)	Forbes (VA)	King (IA)	Pearce (NM)	Smith (MO)
Blackburn (TN)	Foxx (NC)	Kingston (GA)	Perry (PA)	Smith (TX)
Brady (TX)	Franks (AZ)	Labrador (ID)	Petri (WI)	Southerland (FL)
Bridenstine (OK)	Garrett (NJ)	LaMalfa (CA)	Pitts (PA)	Stewart (UT)
Brooks (AL)	Gibbs (OH)	Lamborn (CO)	Poe (TX)	Stockman (TX)
Broun (GA)	Gingrey (GA)	Lankford (OK)	Pompeo (KS)	Stutzman (IN)
Bucshon (IN)	Gohmert (TX)	Latta (OH)	Posey (FL)	Thornberry (TX)
Burgess (TX)	Goodlatte (VA)	Long (MO)	Price (GA)	Turner (OH)
Campbell (CA)	Gosar (AZ)	Lucas (OK)	Radel (FL)	Wagner (MO)
Carter (TX)	Gowdy (SC)	Luetkemeyer (MO)	Reed (NY)	Walberg (MI)
Cassidy (LA)	Granger (TX)	Lummis (WY)	Renacci (OH)	Walden (OR)
Chabot (OH)	Graves (MO)	Marchant (TX)	Rice (SC)	Walorski (IN)
Chaffetz (UT)	Graves (GA)	Marino (PA)	Roby (AL)	Weber (TX)
Collins (NY)	Griffith (VA)	Massie (KY)	Roe (TN)	Wenstrup (OH)
Collins (GA)	Hall (TX)	McCaul (TX)	Rogers (AL)	Westmoreland (GA)
Conaway (TX)	Harris (MD)	McClintock (CA)	Rohrabacher (CA)	Williams (TX)
Culberson (TX)	Hartzler (MO)	Meadows (NC)	Rokita (IN)	Wilson (SC)
Denham (CA)	Hensarling (TX)	Messer (IN)	Rooney (FL)	Woodall (GA)
Desantis (FL)	Holding (NC)	Mica (FL)	Ross (FL)	Yoder (KS)
DesJarlais (TN)	Hudson (NC)	Miller (MI)	Rothfus (PA)	Yoho (FL)
Duffy (WI)	Huelskamp (KS)	Miller (FL)	Royce (CA)	



## What You Need to Know about the Federal Budget Proposals

**O**n Oct. 16 the House and Senate passed and President Obama signed a continuing resolution/debt ceiling bill after a 16 day shutdown of the federal government. In addition to other provisions, the law:

- ① Funds the government through January 15, but at sequestration levels;
- ② Extends the debt limit until February 7;
- ③ Provides back pay for federal workers who were furloughed during the shutdown; and
- ④ Establishes a budget conference committee to come up with long-term spending plans by December 13.

The first decision for the conference committee will be what the “topline” number is for discretionary spending for agencies. The CR/debt ceiling deal specified \$986 billion, but Republicans argued for the \$967 billion amount dictated by the Budget Control Act for fiscal 2014. Senate Democrats had previously drafted their appropriations bills using a topline number of \$1.058 trillion.

House Budget Chairman Paul Ryan (WI) and Senate Budget Chairwoman Patty Murray (WA), who will lead the conference, have not yet said whether they will employ reconciliation. Here is what Ryan, Murray and President Obama are proposing:

### House of Representatives Fiscal 2014 Budget Resolution

H. Con. Res. 25, the Ryan budget resolution, would assume that the spending levels required by sequestration remain in place. It would assume that all discretionary savings from sequestration beginning in fiscal 2014 will come from non-defense programs. It would assume \$5.7 trillion in reductions over the next 10 years in both discretionary and mandatory spending.

It would restructure Medicare into a voucher system by 2024 and overhaul the tax code, but without raising additional revenues.

The Ryan budget makes deep cuts to federal employee pensions, by requiring current

employees to increase their contributions to retirement by 5.5 percent of salary. The pension cuts are estimated to reap \$132 billion over 10 years.

- FERS employees hired before 2013 would go from paying 0.8 percent of salary to their pension to 6.3% of salary to their pension.
- CSRS employees would go from paying 7 percent of their salary to their pension to 12.5 percent of salary to their pension.

The Ryan budget also reduces the federal workforce by 10 percent using attrition, and assumes discretionary spending cuts of \$49 billion over ten years.

### Senate Fiscal 2014 Budget Resolution

S. Con. Res. 8, the Murray budget resolution for fiscal 2014, sets broad spending and revenue targets over the next 10 years. It would allow up to \$966 billion in discretionary spending for fiscal 2014, the statutory level reflecting automatic cuts known as sequestration, but would call for replacing the sequester with a combination of revenue increases and spending cuts. It would direct the Senate Finance Committee to produce legislation that would increase revenue by \$975 billion over 10 years.

The Murray budget resolution made no recommendations cutting federal employees pay or benefits and criticized the House budget resolution’s proposals in these areas.

### President Obama’s Budget Proposal for Fiscal 2014

On top of a paltry 1 percent pay raise, the budget would increase current employee pension contributions by 1.2 percent over three years:

- FERS employees hired before 2013 would go from paying 0.8 percent of salary to 2 percent of salary.
- CSRS employees would go from paying 7 percent of salary to 8.2 percent of salary.

AFGE will immediately begin to fight all attempts to cut federal pay, retirement, or health care as Congress hashes out fiscal 2014 spending levels. Federal employees are nobody’s bargaining chip. Our message to lawmakers is clear: No more cuts, no more furloughs, no more sacrifices on the backs of hardworking Americans. We will also fight to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits from any reductions, including cuts from the so-called chained CPI.

## Diversity Week Features Human Rights Training Conference, Y.O.U.N.G. and Pride Summits

**A**FGE's 2013 Diversity Week sponsored by the Women's and Fair Practices Departments featured the Human Rights Training Conference. The conference, held August 19-22, drew members from all over the country to focus on civil, human, women and workers' rights issues. Nearly 500 members converged on the city of Pittsburgh for a week of training and activism.

Throughout the week, participants took courses in equal employment opportunity law, collective bargaining, conflict resolution and workplace diversity. Additional training courses also focused on work-life balance, developing new leaders within the labor movement, and building the skills and knowledge base of women's and fair practices coordinators.

"The Human Rights Training Conference is one of the largest training events in AFGE," said AFGE National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Augusta Y. Thomas. "We are proud to be one of the few unions that provide this level of in-depth training on important human rights issues to our diverse membership. We must provide our members with the tools and education needed to support working families and defend their rights on the job."

This year's training was flanked by AFGE's 2nd Annual Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation (Y.O.U.N.G.) Training Summit and the union's first Pride Training Summit, which focused on workplace issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers.

Participants of the Y.O.U.N.G. Summit engaged in training courses including understanding EEO, reasonable accommodations, leadership, union/work/life balance, labor history, collective bargaining, organizing young workers and community/political engagement. Participants also met with other activists in their districts to develop regional action plans to get younger workers more involved in the union.

The Pride Training Summit provided participants with tools and information regarding equal employment opportunity law, and organizing and messaging around LGBT labor issues.

The training also included a session on LGBT labor leadership development, which illustrated how LGBT members and allies can hone their leadership skills for union building and effectively representing all federal and D.C. government workers. As part of the leadership course, participants also discussed terminology, health and safety concerns and ways to ensure LGBT members are included in the labor movement.

Save the date! Next year's Diversity Week will be held in Minneapolis, Minn. August 23-29, 2014.



*AFGE National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices, Augusta Y. Thomas*



## BIG ENOUGH TO WIN AFGE Plans for Future at National Leadership Conference



AFGE honors President Emeritus  
Kenneth Blaylock



**M**ore than 700 activists attended AFGE's National Leadership Conference held Sept. 24-27 in Orlando, Fla. Their goal: To build a strategy big enough to stop the attacks on federal workers.

"If we want to end the vicious attacks from anti-federal worker politicians we need to grow this movement," said AFGE National President J. David Cox, Sr. "We need one million federal workers standing up and saying ENOUGH. Enough of the pay freezes. Enough of the benefit cuts. Enough of the furloughs. We are many, we are strong, and we will not take it anymore!"

Throughout the conference, participants worked in groups to refine the vision, mission, core values, guiding principles and strategic objects for the union during the next 10 years. To make this vision a reality, activists

pledged to build on the power of the union, engage new leaders, and energize current and potential members.

Themes of community, justice, equality, inclusion and solidarity guided activists as they listened to guest speakers and worked on plans for future projects. The strategic objectives refined during the meeting include organizing, legislative mobilization, political influence, strong local unions and education/communications. With your help, we will enter a new era of promise for our union and the hundreds of thousands we represent.

A special thanks goes out to all who contributed to the planning and execution of this critical conference.

Reference material from the conference is accessible via member login on the AFGE website at [www.afge.org/WIN](http://www.afge.org/WIN).

AFGE



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