

AFGE



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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

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Meet AFGE's Choice for 2016

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

Everyone has heard the saying that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Well at AFGE, we plan for success, and we are winning major victories all over the country as a result.

In the past year alone we surpassed 300,000 members for the first time, won new locality areas for 102,000 federal employees, organized dozens of new units, nearly doubled our legislative and political presence across the U.S., introduced cutting-edge online trainings, ended the retirement penalty for law enforcement officers, and much more.

None of this happened by accident; nor did it happen overnight. It took years of careful strategic planning, beginning with the first leadership conference in the early 1990s and continuing to this very day with our Big Enough to Win strategic plan.

It was this commitment to goal-setting and new ideas that set us on a path to 24 consecutive years of growth, and the bold vision of Big Enough to Win that propelled our union past 300,000 members just two years after its inception.

With a new year in front of us, we're not taking our foot off the gas pedal for a single minute, and neither should you. Strategic planning is not a one-time event, but a continual process, and it must be a part of everything our union does.

As you read this message, AFGE's Districts and Bargaining Councils are working with us to develop strategic plans to improve representation, grow their membership, increase legislative/political action, get our message out to the public, and negotiate more rights for the membership. Many locals across the country are doing the same, but many more need to follow suit if we are to meet the challenges ahead in 2016.

2015 was a banner year for AFGE, but we can't celebrate for long. This union is going to have to work harder than ever keep what we've fought so hard to win. The nation will choose a new President in November, and we need to make sure the right person

gets elected. After all, the President is the boss of every federal employee, and if we get a union-busting, small-government ideologue in the Oval Office, our benefits, rights, and jobs could all become a thing of the past.

Brothers and sisters, this is why it is so important to put our minds together now and build a future of our choice – not someone else's. We need to be bigger and stronger to come out on top, and we have a plan to do just that.

So go to www.afge.org/win today and set your local on the path to a brighter future. Help make your union Big Enough to Win.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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What You Need to Know About the 2016 Locality Pay Increase



There was good news and not-so-good news regarding the pay raise for 2016. The good news was that for the first time in six years, we finally got an increase in locality pay. In addition to a 1% across-the-board nationwide adjustment, federal employees will receive a locality increase between 0.1% and 0.6% depending on where they work.

Thirteen new localities were added this year, and all will receive slightly more than they would have if

13 New Locality Areas added in 2016

they'd remained in the Rest of U.S. locality. None of the locality

increases was large. Only 0.3% of payroll was devoted to locality increases.

But the expansion of the number of localities to 13 additional areas was a tremendous achievement. Even though those localities got extremely small locality increases this year, it is important to recognize that they're now "in the game" and eligible for bigger increases in the future.

35%

The current gap between private & public sector pay.

The not-so-good news was the size of the overall raise. At 1.3%, it is nowhere near enough to make up lost ground for five years of near-zero pay adjustments. The average pay gap between the public and private sectors is 35%, and despite a law instructing Congress to close that gap, small pay adjustments have grown that gap rather than shrink it. It will be up to AFGE members to mobilize support for bigger and better pay raises in the future.

What's Next for TSA Officers Now That Negotiations Are Over?



AFGE Local 912 members, TSA Council 100 officers and other supporters at an informational picket at St. Louis International Airport.

After months of hard work to improve working conditions for TSOs, contract negotiations between AFGE and TSA concluded at midnight on December 9.

Although the AFGE TSA Council 100 bargaining team and TSA did not come to an agreement on all of the provisions in the contract, they did agree on more

than 50% of the contract. There will be a ratification vote for the items both sides were able to agree on and the remaining sections of the contract will be presented before a panel of three neutral and independent arbitrators for a final decision. The ratification process is tentatively scheduled to begin in February. Until then, the current TSA collective bargaining agreement will remain in effect.

Throughout the negotiations process, TSA repeatedly tried to take away more workplace rights from TSOs. The AFGE bargaining team refused to stand for anything less than a new, improved contract for all TSA Officers. We believe TSOs should not be treated like second-class federal employees, and we're going to keep up the fight for better shift bids, uniform policy, appeal rights, and more.

Now AFGE is going to push harder than ever to get TSOs the respect we deserve. The fight continues.



Why We're Supporting Hillary Clinton for President of the U.S.

The 2016 presidential election is fast approaching, and no one will be impacted more by our nation's decision than government employees. The next president will be our boss for four years and hold enormous sway over our jobs, our pay, and our retirement, and we must do everything we can to support the candidate who supports us.

AFGE needs to make sure that whoever occupies the White House values our work and our agencies' mission to serve the public. We need someone with the spine to stand strong against the anti-government ideologues that want to shut down the government and eliminate your jobs.

That's why AFGE is proud to endorse Hillary Clinton for President of the United States.

"Secretary Clinton shares AFGE's vision for a strong and vibrant government workforce that has the necessary tools and support needed to deliver vital programs and services to the American public," said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. "The American people count on government employees to keep their streets safe, deliver their Social Security checks on time, and care for our nation's heroes at veterans' hospitals, and AFGE can count on Hillary Clinton to help us get it done."

While many candidates have used government employees as political punching bags, Clinton has stood up for employees at the VA and other agencies. While other candidates are trying to raid your pay, Clinton wants to protect it – and give you a fair raise. While many candidates want to destroy AFGE and other unions, Clinton believes unions are critical to building a vibrant middle class. While other candidates have introduced legislation to make federal employees at-will, Clinton is committed to protecting you against retaliation, discrimination, and wrongful personnel actions by allowing union reps to do their jobs protecting frontline employees' fundamental due process rights.

"I believe in the right to organize and bargain collectively. I think we've lost track of what it takes to balance the economy so it works for everyone. Workers need to be at the table."

- Hillary Clinton at AFGE Presidential Forum

Clinton also assured AFGE that she won't let the Department of Veterans Affairs be exploited to satisfy a political agenda. She wants to make sure our correctional officers and TSA officers are safe on the job, and SSA employees can continue to serve Americans at community offices and elsewhere.

Read more about her position on key government employee issues at www.afge.org/candidates.

Secretary Clinton wants to be AFGE's partner in restoring pride in government service, and the time to come together and answer the call is now.

How We Decided to Endorse

We did not come to our endorsement decision lightly. Before we decided which candidate deserved AFGE's support, we reached out to all announced presidential candidates – Republican and Democratic – with a questionnaire to gauge their positions on federal employees. We conducted a scientific survey of our members' candidate/issue preferences, monitored presidential debates, and held our historic presidential forum with the two candidates who promptly responded to our questionnaires.

AFGE is a large organization with a variety of political opinions, so all endorsements are made on candidates' stances on the issues alone – not party. We support candidates who support a better life for our members and the public they serve; we oppose candidates who villainize public service and suppress unions, workplace protections, and voting rights.

After reviewing every candidate's record on federal employee pay and benefits, furloughs, shutdowns, and government services, the AFGE National Executive Council voted to endorse Hillary Clinton.



Bernie Sanders speaks to members of the NEC and Bargaining Council Presidents at AFGE's Presidential Forum.

Now we need to close ranks and stand by her in what will no doubt be a long fight against a determined anti-government, anti-worker onslaught.

What Other Candidates Have Said about Government Employees

Donald Trump: "I'm not cutting services, but I'm cutting spending. But I may cut Department of Education...So the Department of Education is one. Environmental Protection [Agency], what they do is a disgrace. Every week they come out with new regulations."

He also believes sequestration cuts don't go far enough.

Ben Carson: "I think that's one of the things that people so vehemently want to get rid of, big



Hillary Clinton speaks to members of the NEC and Bargaining Council Presidents at AFGE's Presidential Forum.

Hillary Clinton Supports:

- A Real Federal Pay Increase
- Defined Benefit Pensions
- Employee Due Process Rights
- The Right to Form and Join a Union
- Pay for Workers Furloughed in a Shutdown
- Reducing Overreliance on Contractors

government. You know, we have 4.1 million (sic) federal employees.”

Ted Cruz (a ring leader of the 2013 government shutdown): “Right now, federal employees earn substantially more than the private sector does. I don’t think there is any entitlement to take our tax dollars and to live in a privileged condition being a federal employee.”

Marco Rubio (a ring leader of the 2013 government shutdown): “More government isn’t going to help you get ahead. It’s going to hold you back. More government isn’t going to create more opportunities. It’s going to limit them. And more government isn’t going to inspire new ideas, new businesses and new private sector jobs. It’s going to create uncertainty.”

He also authored a bill that would allow VA to fire

employees without cause and allow even more retaliation against whistleblowers.

Job Bush: He supports ending across-the-board pay raises: “It’s a system in the old ways, rule by inertia and unaccountable to the people. With more than 2 million people on the federal payroll, these programs and these problems carry a heavy cost, and a few serious reforms will go a long way.” He also wants to make it easier to fire federal employees.

Chris Christie: “I will be the vessel through which they (the American people) can fix this country, but it’s not about me....It’s about all of you and getting this government off your back and out of your way...”

Where Do We Go From Here?

In the coming months, AFGE will be fully involved in mobilizing support for Clinton and other pro-worker candidates prior to Election Day, and we all need to do our part to protect our livelihoods.

We encourage you to join us in knocking on doors to get out the vote, phone-banking, and talking to your co-workers on why it’s important to support pro-worker candidates.

Hillary Clinton will fight for you, but she will need you and all of us on her team to win the White House. Stay tuned for more updates on what you can do to win the White House for working families.



Hillary Has Our Back
Now We Have Hers

The Veterans Have Spoken: Poll Shows VA Care is Number One

8 in 10 Veterans

Believe their health care should be paid for in full, not a voucher which may not cover all costs.



Source: Vet Voice Foundation

The poll found that veterans strongly support the care they receive, but wish they could get it sooner. Today, the VA has about 41,500 vacant health care positions, and a flood of new veterans are entering the system. The solution to wait times isn't scrapping the entire system – it's hiring the clinicians it takes to get the job done.

Veterans value the expert care they receive by qualified doctors, nurses and other medical staff. It is the only health care system in the country built to meet the specific needs of veterans. They understand that they're unlikely to get that same level of specialized service and attention outside the VA system.

Lawmakers need to stop taking their cues from Koch Brothers-funded front groups and start listening to what actual veterans want. What veterans want is for the VA to hire more doctors and nurses so they can be treated faster – not handed a voucher and told to fend for themselves.

Hear what veterans have to say about VA health care at www.afge.org/AskAVet.

It doesn't matter where they live.
It doesn't matter how old they are.
It doesn't matter what they earn.

**All Veterans Deserve Quality
VA Health Care.**



Source: Vet Voice Foundation

When veterans return home, they expect and deserve to receive world-class health care and medical treatment for the injuries they have sustained, both physically and mentally.

As a new survey of veterans makes clear, veterans overwhelmingly want to receive that care in VA hospitals and clinics – not in private-sector facilities where the top concern is making money, not healing our wounded warriors.

Eight out of 10 veterans surveyed in the bipartisan poll said they are opposed to voucherizing the VA health care system. Veterans agree that forcing them to shop for care on the open market, instead of being treated by VA doctors and nurses, means their health care will suffer and they will end up footing the bill for claims that are denied or only partially paid.

Unfortunately, some lawmakers have proposed dismantling the VA health care system and leaving veterans to deal with private insurance companies. They are listening to lobbyists from the Koch Brothers-backed Concerned Veterans for America, instead of listening to what veterans actually want.

Stay in the Loop with AFGE
Go to www.afge.org/update
and update your contact information today.

2015: The Year of the Member Activist

Activists rallied across the U.S. to grow the union & fight for worker rights.

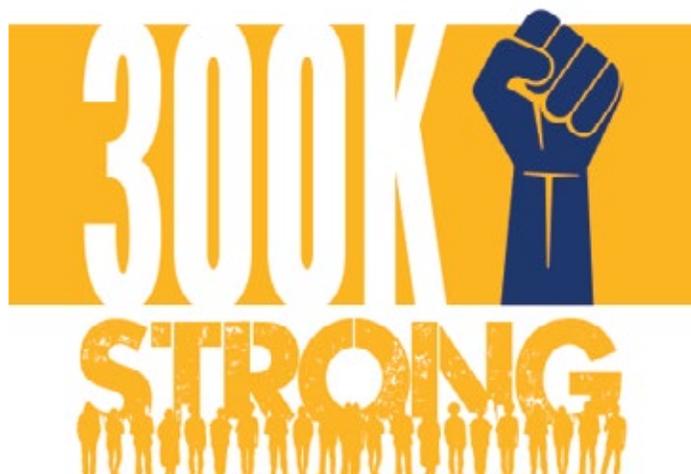


2015 was a year of hard-fought victories for AFGE. Corporate-sponsored politicians tried hard to destroy us left and right, but we fought back just as hard and made inroads on many fronts. From attempts to allow agencies to fire employees without cause to a near-government shutdown, we've beat them all. Here are some of the memorable victories in 2015.

Surpassing 300,000 Members

After decades of strategic planning and hard work, AFGE's membership hit a record high 300,000 members on Oct. 26, 2015 – a historic milestone that caps 24 consecutive years of membership growth.

This is one of the most remarkable achievements in our union's more than 80 years of existence. It's even more remarkable in the light of the vicious attacks labor unions have endured from wealthy special interest groups. Our membership currently stands at 301,668 and growing.



Securing 13 New Locality Areas

AFGE had been pushing for more locality areas to reflect the high cost of living our members have been suffering in several metropolitan areas. In 2015, we succeeded. Thirteen new localities were added, and federal employees working in these areas will receive more locality pay than they would have if they'd remained in the Rest of U.S. locality. This was a tremendous achievement. Even though those localities got small locality increases this year, it is important to recognize that they're now "in the game" and eligible for bigger increases in the future.

Winning a Locality Pay Increase

For the first time in six years, we finally got an increase in locality pay. In addition to a 1% across-the-board nationwide adjustment, federal employees will receive a locality increase between 0.1% and 0.6% in 2016 depending on where they work.

Ending Law Enforcement Retirement Penalty

Thanks to years of hard work by AFGE activists, law enforcement officers and firefighters won't have to pay a 10% penalty if they withdraw from their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) before turning 55.

Making Progress on Pay Equity

Thanks to our persistence, the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Council, which AFGE is a member, voted to unify wages for employees at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey. Currently, blue-collar workers on one side of the base are paid wages based on the New York City pay scale, while those on the other side of the base are paid wages based on the lower Philadelphia scale. AFGE will continue to urge the Obama administration to align all federal locality boundaries so hourly and salaried employees who work in the same location are paid the same locality rate.

We're also pushing for the passage of Rep. Matt Cartwright's bill that would end the practice of treating hourly and salaried workers who work in the same location as if they work in different locations when it comes to calculating local pay rates.

Protecting Whistleblowers, Due Process

We blocked attempts to turn every VA employee into an at-will employee who could be fired without cause. The elected officials who wanted to do this at the VA have said they would expand it governmentwide, putting all workers at risk.

Protecting Federal Jobs

We blocked a bill that would have destroyed 120,000 civilian jobs at the Department of Defense. We stopped privatization of military commissaries nationwide. We also defeated attempts to hand over control of the screening function at the Orlando airport to a for-profit contractor.



AFGE activists and leaders rally for stronger whistleblower protections for VA employees.

Stopped a Shutdown and Sequestration

Besides preventing a government shutdown in October, we secured a two-year budget deal that suspends sequestration and provides increases in spending without imposing financial hardships on federal employees. We also secured a bill that would make sure federal employees get paid in the event of a shutdown.

Protecting Members and Our Ability to Represent Them

We defeated attempts to undermine our finances and take away union reps' ability to protect their coworkers from discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful personnel actions.

Committed to Building the Union



Activists at the 40th National Convention charted the course for a stronger, more active AFGE.

Delegates to the 40th AFGE National Convention in 2015 passed several important provisions that will equip the union with the tools we need to win. The delegates also re-elected the three top national officers who will help us accomplish our goals.

Forward to 2016

There you have it. Our hard-fought victories wouldn't have been possible without the tools, resources, and plans envisioned by the 700 AFGE leaders and activists who came together two years ago in Orlando to fight for this union. We've built on that vision and the results speak for themselves.

Let's work together to protect our jobs, our pay, our health care, our pensions. Let's make sure we're strong enough and big enough to win!

Supreme Court Case Pits Working People Against Wealthy Elite

FRIEDRICHS v. CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



A **bad decision** from the U.S. Supreme Court could limit working people's ability to negotiate better wages, benefits and working conditions.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments soon in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* – a case that could undermine the rights of working people to negotiate collectively for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Every working person should care about this case, even if it doesn't personally affect you. This legal battle is just the latest in a series of attempts by deep-pocketed anti-worker groups to dismantle every program, service, or law that benefits working people. A win for the Koch Brothers here will make it that much harder to fight the next battle.

The case is an attempt to overturn a nearly 40-year-old Supreme Court decision that affirmed the constitutional right of public sector unions to collect fees from employees who choose not to join the union but nonetheless benefit from all of the protections that the union negotiates.

Here's why that matters. We are living in a time where America's economy has swung way out of balance. Everyday Americans are working more than ever, but the only ones benefitting are those at the top of

the economic ladder. It's getting harder for working people to get by, let alone get ahead.

Teachers, firefighters, nurses, and other public sector workers deserve to have advocates fighting on their behalf for better working conditions. Improving their jobs makes it easier for them to deliver quality services to the public.

Unions are one of the few groups advocating for the interest of working people. If we make it harder for unions to do their job, working people will lose a major ally in the fight to build an economy that works for everyone, not just the richest 1 percent.

If we silence the voice of working people at the job site, our public services will suffer and our communities will suffer as a result.

The Supreme Court **must reject this attempt** by wealthy special interests to make it even harder for working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.



Groundbreaking District 14 University A Big Hit

This year, AFGE District 14 held its first-ever university-style training. Drawing dozens of members from across the region, District 14 University is the culmination of months of effort to take their training regimen to the next level.

With influences from the District 5 PORT Training and District 10 Leadership Training, the week-long training featured everything from pep rallies to a wide variety of representation-centered courses. The class structure included core classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with secondary courses on Tuesday and Thursday. This format allowed participants to take multiple classes while focusing on key representational areas.

Participants engaged in core classes like New

Leaders, Financial Officers, EEO, and Representation. Some of the secondary workshops offered included a Local Presidents' Roundtable, Young Workers, Parliamentary Procedure, Workplace Health and Safety, and How to Lead An Effective Local.

"It is critical that we provide these types of learning opportunities for our membership," said AFGE District 14 National Vice President Eric Bunn. "With the diversity of our members in terms of what level of government they work for, it was essential for us to provide educational opportunities that center their particular experiences. We also wanted to create an environment where folks were excited to participate in the training and motivated to share what they learned with their members and stewards at their respective locals."

**Mark your
Calendar!**



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