



5.3%

The Catch-Up Pay You Deserve



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

As citizens of this country, every one of us is endowed with basic rights at home and work. We expect free elections, the ability to spend our money as we choose, freedom from discrimination, and the ability to petition our government for redress of grievances.

These are not privileges. Generations of Americans have fought and died for these basic human rights. Now, one member of Congress is looking to undermine every single one of them. The reason? Because you’re a federal employee.

Rep. Tom Price introduced the worst piece of legislation I’ve ever seen with the most misleading name I’ve ever heard: the Federal Employee Rights Act (FERA), or as I like to call it, the Sit Down and Shut Up Act. If he gets his way, you will lose the ability to deduct your union dues from your paycheck in an outright attempt to minimize your voice at work. It will eliminate democracy in union elections by counting all absent employees as ‘no’ votes, meaning those who don’t show up are assumed to be anti-union. And it would effectively eliminate your right to lobby Congress for jobs, benefits, and better pay.

I wish this were an isolated incident, but it’s not. It is just the latest in a string of venomous proposals targeting the federal workforce. We have seen attempts to double probationary periods, strip VA employees of their due process rights, and remove civil service protections for DoD workers. Price’s bill is part of a systemic attack on working Americans, and other efforts are happening all across America.

Corporate CEOs and billionaires have spent billions of dollars to make it as difficult as possible to join unions and to destroy basic workers’ rights. They understand that the only two institutions standing in the way of their unbridled greed are organized workers and common sense government regulation. They are attacking both with everything they’ve got.

Let me be clear, I don’t take it lightly when I call this the worst legislation ever. This is worse than any pay freeze or benefit cut because it eliminates your basic right to organize and fight back. They want to eliminate your

union so that when you’re harassed by management or forced into a pay freeze, your only choice is to sit there and take it. They want you to show up to work scared for your job every day. After all, you can’t spell “fear” without F-E-R-A.

But brothers and sisters, we’re not the type of people to cower to a bully. We’re the people who support the finest military in the world, stop polluters from poisoning our communities, keep our seniors and veterans healthy, and stand up to cartel bosses pushing drugs to our kids. We believe in what we do, and I believe in the strength that lies in every one of you.

The road ahead will be tough, but I wouldn’t want to walk it with anyone else. Together, we will be big enough to win.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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Union Members Step Up to Help Flint Families



Dozens of AFGE members and leaders traveled to Flint to distribute 36,000 bottles of clean drinking water to residents.

AFGE wasn't the only union to step up for Flint residents. Union plumbers and pipe fitters from across the country came to replace the defective lead piping systems for free. Alongside AFGE, AFSCME, the American Federation of Teachers, Carpenters & Millwrights, Laborers, the NFL Alumni Association and UAW-GM partnered with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition to hold a special "Rebuild Flint" demonstration event on Feb. 19. We proudly stood shoulder to shoulder with the Flint community in their fight for a better future for their children.

The crisis in Flint, Michigan is real. Half of the city's children have tested positive for elevated lead levels after city officials cut corners to find a cheaper source of water. AFGE and other unions have stepped up to find both short-term and long-term solutions for the city.

AFGE members raised enough money to buy 36,000 bottles of clean water for Flint during the 2016 Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference in Washington, D.C. Those efforts built upon the work started by AFGE members in Michigan, particularly Locals 1262 and 3272, who have gone above and beyond to help high-risk Flint families.

36,000

bottles of clean water

Over the President's Day holiday, National President J. David Cox Sr., National Secretary-Treasurer Eugene Hudson Jr., District 7 National Vice President Dorothy James and dozens of AFGE members joined parishioners from the Shiloh Baptist Church to distribute the water in the community. It was a cold and snowy day, but everyone helped out.

But we know these actions won't be enough to end this crisis for good. That's why AFGE is also pressuring Congress to give more funding to the EPA — a move that President Cox says is crucial to fixing the root cause of the lead poisoning. Before distributing water, President Cox along with NST Hudson, and NVP James visited the EPA's Command Center for a tour and discussion of our members' environmental efforts in Flint.

"Public servants at the Environmental Protection Agency are the best defense against this sort of widespread contamination happening, but they need the funding to do it," Cox said. "We must give our researchers and scientists the resources they need to hold the city of Flint accountable for fixing this problem, and to make sure it never happens again."



AFGE President Cox, National Secretary-Treasurer Hudson and 7th District National Vice President Dorothy James joined area members to pitch in.



5.3%

The Catch-Up Pay You Deserve

It's 2016. The Great Recession ended almost seven years ago. The budget deficit has been cut by two-thirds. The economy just entered full employment. Yet federal employees are still struggling to stay afloat. Why is that?

The answer is Congress and the administration have so far refused to restore pay for federal employees, who were forced to foot the bill for a financial crisis they didn't cause.

The collapse of the housing bubble and the bailout of large banks and insurance companies happened because of Wall Street's greed, yet federal employees were forced to accept \$182 billion in cuts to their pay and pensions. There is something seriously wrong with this picture.

What else is wrong? Congress and the White House continue to ignore a 1990 law that governs federal pay. Under the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA), Congress is required to set federal employees' salaries at 95% of those in the private sector and state and local government. Yet Congress and several past presidents have refused to comply with the law and instead opt to give federal

employees whatever they want (typically peanuts). That's why we still have the pay gap of 35% between the public and private sectors. Whenever Congress can't do its job, or lavishes too many tax breaks on corporations who ship jobs overseas, they just make a withdrawal from the federal employee ATM.

Guess what? Transaction declined. We deserve a 5.3% pay adjustment and we need your help to fight for one. AFGE members have had enough of the penny-ante pay increases, and we're leading the charge to catch up on the pay we have earned.

Getting Congress to Step Up to the Plate

Hundreds of AFGE members gathered in the rain across the street from the Capitol Building on Feb. 9 to call on Congress to give federal employees the wage adjustment they deserve: 5.3% next year. Shortly after, Congressman Gerry Connolly of Virginia introduced a bill that would give them just that.

The hundreds of AFGE members who came to Washington for the Legislative and Grassroots Mobilization Conference made it possible. With your help we will make it a reality.

“Federal employees are just like other workers – they are struggling to keep up with house and car payments, student loan debt, and rising costs for prescriptions and groceries and other essentials,” said AFGE President J. David Cox Sr. “We are not asking for any special treatment, just a catch-up contribution to start making up for the \$182 billion that federal employees personally sacrificed to help get our nation through the greatest economic downturn.”

“There is a systematic assault on working men and women in this country,” Connolly told AFGE members at the rally. “You saw it in Indiana when they took over. You saw it in Wisconsin when they took over. You saw it in Michigan.... We have to fight back.”



“This is about empowering the ability of working men and women to make a fair wage, to provide for their families, to have a future, to have opportunity. And that’s why unions are so important,” he said.

Rep. Connolly understands that federal employees’ contributions to this country are worth more than the 1.6% raise proposed by the White House. Connolly was joined at the rally by several other members of Congress, including Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Rep. Rick Nolan of Minnesota, Rep. Hank Johnson of Georgia, and Rep. Mark Takai of Hawaii.

“It pisses me off when I hear our Republican friends beat up on federal employees. I have to remind them that they get a federal paycheck too,” Congressman Elijah Cummings of Maryland told AFGE members at the conference.



AFGE members rally in Washington to call for a 5.3% wage adjustment.

AFGE is urging Congress to stand up for fair wages and pass the Connolly bill.

Pay is Only Half the Story

Federal employee wages aren’t the only thing these politicians are attacking. Driven by politics and an anti-worker agenda, some lawmakers have drafted legislation that would take away even federal employees’ most basic worker rights to join a union and have a voice at work. The latest and most outrageous bill was recently introduced by Rep. Tom Price of Georgia.

Under H.R. 4461, Price proposes that anyone who chooses not to show up during a union election is automatically counted as a ‘no’ vote, shattering any semblance of democracy. He also wants to take away federal employees’ right to have their dues deducted from their paycheck. He doesn’t think federal employees are smart enough to choose whether or not to become a union member.

It’s time to end this systematic attack on working people and union members. We’re urging AFGE members to reach out to their lawmakers to support the Connolly bill and defeat anti-worker bills. It’s about time we get the raise we deserve. It’s time for 5.3%!

**Join the Fight for
5.3% Catch-Up Pay!**

Visit www.afge.org/CatchUp

Raise Up 2016: What this Election is All About



Our members have spoken loud and clear. Your paycheck is the number one concern going into the November elections.

You have withstood years of pay freezes or miniscule increases, budget games in Washington that resulted in a government shutdown, and relentless political attacks on your jobs and rights.

That's why AFGE was first out of the gate in calling for a 5.3% wage catch-up in 2017. That's why we're fighting proposals in Congress that would silence your voice at the work site and outsource your jobs. That's why the theme of this election is Raise Up 2016.

This election is about two things: holding accountable those politicians who benefit their wealthy patrons at the expense of your families, and building support for candidates who will stand up for us when it counts.

We must work together to elect candidates who support a fair pay increase, protect our retirement, and give us the respect we deserve.

That's why AFGE has endorsed former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton for the 2016 presidential election. Hillary has a proven track record of taking on the tough fights and delivering results.

She has what it takes to stand up to politicians looking to cut your pay and privatize your job.

And when we do elect her to the White House, she'll need every ounce of that toughness to push back against the dangerous proposals we're seeing from a hopelessly partisan Congress. The only way to stop these awful proposals is by getting active in races to elect lawmakers who believe that you should get the pay and benefits that you deserve for your hard work.

We need to support candidates who understand the economic troubles facing our citizens. Many families are struggling to make ends meet, let alone get ahead. The rules have been stacked against the working people who keep our economy running: the tank mechanic, the airport officer, the VA nurse, the food service worker. That must change.

AFGE will be doing everything we can to support pro-worker candidates who will join our fight to raise wages, create good jobs, expand benefits, and preserve workplace rights and protections.

We all have a role to play. We must attend town hall meetings, visit union members in their homes, and most importantly, vote. It's time we take the country back for working people everywhere.

**Do You Want to Volunteer
in this Election?**

**Send your name, local #, and contact
information to 2016volunteers@afge.org.**

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY

No Vote Left Behind

Across the country lawmakers want to make it harder for regular people to vote. The Voting Rights Act enacted in 1965 forbids discriminatory voting practices, but it seems like the same unfair tactics that were used decades ago are making a comeback. This year, 16 states will have new voting restrictions in place ranging from strict photo ID requirements to early voting cutbacks to purging of voter rolls.

We need AFGE members, friends and family to contact their lawmakers and urge them to support and vote on the Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015 – two important bills that support fair and equal access to the polls.

AFGE Defends Democracy is the Women's and Fair Practices departments' nonpartisan program designed to ensure all people have equal access to the polls and are able to vote properly and without intimidation.



The efforts for 2016 will highlight the voter protection campaign “No Vote Left Behind” and the Y.O.U.N.G. worker campaign “Use Your Voice.”

To stay up to date on the information from the “No Vote Left Behind” campaign, send an email to voterprotection@afge.org.

Looking Back and Marching Forward on Civil Rights and Diversity

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark piece of civil rights legislation in the United States that outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It was written to end the unfair application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace, and by facilities that served the general public.

Despite the gains toward equality in our history,

the modern civil rights movement continues to toil toward equality for people of color, women, students, the elderly and LGBT communities. Although progress has been made, there is plenty more to be done and we need your help.

Join hundreds of fellow AFGE activists at our third annual Diversity Week conference in Washington, D.C. Details can be found on the invitation below and www.afge.org/diversityweek.



3rd Annual Diversity Week • August 12-19, 2016

Gaylord National Resort at the National Harbor

www.afge.org/diversityweek



Snowzilla: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Union Members Who Keep D.C. Safe and Warm



Members of AFGE Local 1975 helped the Washington area dig out from an historic blizzard.

the union,” said AFGE Local 1975 President Clifford Lowery.

More than 20 AFGE Local 2741 members volunteered to work at D.C. recreation centers that served as warming facilities for homeless and displaced residents during the storm.

While much of the East Coast was shut down in late January thanks to winter storm Jonas, many AFGE members were working around the clock to keep their communities safe and warm.

AFGE Local 1975 members from the D.C. Department of Transportation worked 12-hour shifts for five days straight. They oversaw logistics for the snow plow trucks and ensured all essential employees had the proper rest, shelter, and food they needed to complete their jobs.

“AFGE members did an outstanding job during these trying times. We couldn’t have done this without

“Assisting at the warming centers show a different side of labor. It shows community building, saves resources, and encourages civic responsibility,” said AFGE Local 2741 Chief Steward Dev Hillman.

Members at Local 2725 who work at the D.C. Housing Authority operated plow trucks in the city’s housing communities and made sure residents didn’t have to go without heat.

Government workers nationwide worked tirelessly to help their communities survive winter storm Jonas, so give a quick thank you the next time you see your friendly community civil servant.

You Could Win a Free Scholarship to Grantham University

GRANTHAM
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Get discounted tuition and apply for Grantham University's annual scholarship contest in the member benefits section of www.afge.org

Grantham has provided me with the flexibility to earn a master’s degree in my spare time. As the Grantham/AFGE 2013 Scholarship Award winner, I feel blessed and grateful to have this opportunity. To work, volunteer, and take courses over the past two years in sickness and health at times was a struggle. The Professors are all brilliant and extremely good teachers.

Bill Schweizer, Local 2513, District 2

Working People Turn to Unions to Brave the New Economy



signed up a majority of their fellow workers. Then, they won an election for skilled trades workers in the plant.

New Sectors, New Unions: Working people in non-traditional sectors are forming unions

- Media outlets like The Huffington Post, Gawker, The Guardian US, ThinkProgress, Salon, and Vice Media all had major organizing wins.
- Taxi and Uber drivers are organizing and mobilizing in cities across the country.
- Teaching and research assistants are working to restore their right to collective bargaining for thousands at schools like Columbia, Cornell, Harvard and the New School University, thanks to support by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the UAW.

Despite Threats, Public-Sector Unions Grow: We know we are stronger when we stand together

- At AFGE, we're so proud to stand with more than 300,000 government employees, the highest membership in our history. As Congress steps up its attacks on workers' pay, retirement security, and rights at work, employees are joining together and standing up for the middle class livelihood they've earned.
- With attacks on public-sector collective bargaining (like the U.S. Supreme Court case *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*) looming large, unions still signed up hundreds of thousands of teachers, nurses, social workers, service workers and other public employees already covered by union contracts.

The labor movement's obituary has been written countless times over the years, but new findings from the Pew Research Center show labor unions are seen more positively today than they were five years ago. Forty-five percent of respondents say unions have a positive impact on the country, up from 32% in 2010. Younger people have a far more positive view of labor unions than their older peers, with 57% of millennials agreeing unions have a positive impact—a figure that has increased dramatically during the past five years.

But it doesn't stop there. According to the findings, titled "Fighting for a Better Life: How Working People Across America Are Organizing to Raise Wages and Improve Work from the AFL-CIO," unions have been making huge headway in places you might not expect.

Building Unions and Defying Stereotypes: The South is rising, thanks to labor

- What happens when workers of the Commercial Vehicle Group are fed up with "Walmart Wages?" They joined the United Auto Workers (UAW).
- Inspired by their brothers and sisters, Volkswagen members of UAW Local 42 in Chattanooga, Tenn.,

Younger Generation Views Unions Most Positively

Percentage of Americans by age who say unions have a positive effect on the way things are going in this country:

Millennial	57
Gen X	42
Boomer	41
Silent	28

Source: Pew Research

Augusta Thomas, Eric Young Honored as Trailblazers in Civil Rights and Labor Movements

For decades, the labor movement has stood at the forefront of social justice and reform. Earlier this year, two of AFGE's own were honored for their trailblazing work in defining the civil and labor rights of all Americans.

In Greensboro, N.C., the International Civil Rights Center and Museum presented AFGE National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Augusta Y. Thomas with the prestigious Sit-In Participants Award in honor of her defiant stand against the state's Jim Crow laws.

In her acceptance speech, Thomas told the story of when she first decided to join the sit-ins in Greensboro. After seeing the actions of the Greensboro Four on television, and against the wishes of her husband and father, she left Louisville and travelled to join them, feeling it was her duty to aid the movement any way that she could.

"My motto has always been 'Do for those who cannot do for themselves,'" Thomas said. "I believe in helping all people, especially those who are treated unfairly. And as we know unfairness can sometimes come because of your race, your gender, if you're LGBT, your age whether you are young or a senior, your physical ability and so many other reasons."

AFGE's second honoree, Council of Prison Locals (CPL) President Eric Young, was awarded for his work



AFGE Council of Prison Locals President Eric Young



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

reforming mandatory minimum sentencing laws and building a union voice to thousands of correctional workers.

The National Action Network (NAN) honored Young for his commitment to reducing prison overcrowding and improving officer and inmate safety in the federal prison system. Young is the first African American to serve as CPL President, and hopes that the honor brings more attention to common sense sentencing laws.

"Sentencing reform is a moral issue," Young said. "America now spends more than \$80 billion annually to incarcerate more than two million people in our nation's prisons. The results are crowded and violent prisons, and a booming private prison industry that spends millions of dollars to keep prisons bursting at the seams. We can't let these foolish policies put correctional workers' lives at risk any longer."

AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. was on hand to congratulate both Thomas and Young.

"It is an honor and a privilege to have Augusta and Eric as leaders in our union," Cox said. "Every day I get to work side-by-side with activists who inspire others to make our country truer to its values. We should all be proud to call them sister and brother."

You Won't Believe What TSA Officers Found in Carry-on Bags



Loaded guns. Hand grenades. Knives. Brass knuckles. Even a gigantic mallet.

These are the prohibited items that TSA Officers (TSOs) find in passengers' carry-on bags all the time at airport checkpoints. Last year, TSOs discovered 2,653 firearms at 236 airports – a 20% increase from 2014 and a new record. Of the firearms found, more than 80% were loaded.

Not only was there an uptick in firearms, there was also an increase in the number of airline passengers. TSA Officers screened over 708 million passengers, 1.6 billion

carry-on bags, and 432 million checked bags in 2015.

“Morale for TSA Officers is at an all-time low. They are consistently treated like second-class employees as compared to other federal workers,” AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. said. “The continuous hike in loaded firearms and other dangerous objects discovered in carry-on bags shows just how essential these public servants are. It’s high time TSA started treating them like it.”

AFGE is currently working toward a new, improved union contract and fair pay for all TSA Officers. In February, AFGE secured the introduction of a piece of legislation that would move TSOs onto the GS pay scale and give them the same rights as every other federal employee. Help TSOs get the respect they deserve. Do your part at www.afge.org/title5.

Top Five Airports for Firearm Findings Were:

- Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport: 153
- Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport: 144
- Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport: 100
- Denver International Airport: 90
- Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport: 73

Data Breach Update: Consolidated Lawsuit Moves Forward

When AFGE's national office first learned that sensitive, personal information of our members had been comprised by a major intrusion into data systems maintained by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, we stepped into high gear.

We demanded and received regular briefings by administration officials who responded to the data breaches. We worked with lawmakers to secure passage of legislation that vastly increased credit monitoring and other protections for affected employees. And we were the first organization to file a class-action lawsuit against the government in response to their negligence.

To best represent our members, we chose one of the best law firms in the country to handle our lawsuit: Girard Gibbs LLP. Since our lawsuit was filed, at least 18 other lawsuits have been filed by unions and other employee groups.

In January, the U.S. District Judge handling the consolidated case named the managing partner of Girard Gibbs, Daniel Girard, to serve as lead counsel over the entire case. As this case moves forward, Mr. Girard will be serving as the chief advocate for all of the 22 million current and former federal employees, job applicants, and their family members whose information was stolen during this unprecedented data breach.

AFGE



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GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO**

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Your Home Is Waiting

The Union Plus Mortgage program is one of some 40 benefits available to help AFGE members. The program is exclusively for union members and their parents and children. Benefits include mortgage hardship assistance from Union Plus to help protect members' homes in the face of financial hardship. With Union Plus, a mortgage is more than a monthly payment. It's long-term protection for everything your home means to you.



**Learn more at:
UnionPlus.org/Mortgage**

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