



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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This Means War

Members take action in response to anti-union decision by Dept. of Education



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

Sisters and Brothers,
Y'all have heard me say it time and time again,
"I can't promise you a win, but I can promise you a fight."

Well, we've been fighting on all fronts – VA, TSA, BOP Education, EPA, SSA. The list seems endless these days, but I'll tell you this: our members are fired up like never before.

In April alone we organized, picketed, and rallied in Orlando and saved over 1,000 TSA jobs. We're pushing back on the Department of Education's illegal union busting with everything we have. We've held Congressional town halls raising awareness of how budget cuts at the Bureau of Prisons endanger officers, inmates, and communities.

The AFGE Week of Action is the dedicated time for members to mobilize in their home state and Washington, DC. During this time, we saw district office visits with Congressmembers and Senators, pickets and rallies, lunch and learns, media interviews and opinion editorials, and much more.

If you didn't get involved this year, I encourage you to do at least one action in your community that helps lift the role of federal and D.C. government employees.

It's always important to talk to your family, friends, and community groups about the role of federal and D.C. government employees play in keeping our country efficient, healthy, and strong. As the weather gets warmer and we head into the summer months, we can't let our union priorities fall by the wayside. Spring and summer barbeques are the perfect time to bring coworkers and family together for voter registration drives and neighborhood canvassing.

To beat back the attacks we face today and make lawmakers think twice before going after our jobs, our pay, our retirement and other benefits, we have to show our collective power. They need to see that we're not going to lay down and surrender, we're going to fight – from the halls of Congress to the ballot box.

The closer we get to the upcoming elections in November, the greater tensions will grow in Congress.

As of now we're facing three different bills in Congress that all try to privatize parts of the VA; we're also hearing there's a bill attacking official time waiting in the wings.

These tactics are designed to wear us down. They think that if they keep pushing from all sides, we will break. That if they keep up the pressure in the workplace, they can scare you into submission.

Well, they are wrong. I know our members, and I know federal and D.C. government employees. There is no one prouder than the people who work for our government. We are proud in our roles, the work that directly benefits the lives of others, and the oath we all take.

Let's continue the fight; for our families, for our communities, for our country.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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J. David Cox Sr. National President
Joseph P. Flynn National Secretary-Treasurer
Augusta Y. Thomas National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices

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AFGE Activists Mobilize for Higher Wages & Benefits During National Week of Action



In early May, activists around the country mobilized for AFGE's national Week of Action. It was a transformative time-- where hundreds of rank-and-file AFGE members took action at home. Members met with lawmakers in their home states and Districts to urge their support on the issues we care about most.

Around the country, members held Lunch and Learns, staged rallies, and made phone calls to their representatives.

After meeting with his local representative, President of Local 1040 Robert Millhollin says he hopes members who have not been active in the past will act in 2018. "I met with Congressman Marc Veasey of the 33rd District of Texas and his District Director Anne Hagan," says Robert. "Thanks to the materials AFGE provided we went in prepared-- knowing he was a friend to TSA employees. It was a very conversational meeting and we asked him to cosponsor upcoming bill HR 99."

"Our local does a lot of good things but we have not been as proactive about getting out there and talking to our local representatives as we should be. This Week of Action has given us the kick in the butt we needed."

If you believe you deserve higher wages, good benefits, and job security, it's up to you to get involved. Visit www.afge.org/events to join the fight for better pay and working conditions.

Making the case to lawmakers is as easy as 1-2-3:

- 1 Federal employees earn about 5 percent less today than at the start of the decade, when adjusted for inflation, due to years of pay freezes and subpar wage hikes.
- 2 Without this modest pay raise, our wages simply can't keep up with rising costs for essentials like food, medicine, and health insurance.
- 3 Federal agencies can't attract and retain the best and brightest workers if federal wages are not competitive with the private sector.

We need all lawmakers to support the FAIR Act – the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act – which would provide all federal workers with a 3 percent pay adjustment in 2019. The bill has been introduced in both the House (HR 4775) and Senate (S 2295), but it has zero chance of being passed into law unless we fight to make it happen.

Our members live and work in every congressional district in this country. When we visit with our lawmakers or their staffs, whether in D.C. or in their local offices, we are speaking not just as government workers but as their own constituents.

Department of Education at



AFGE holds rally against anti-union decision by Department of Education

A FGE is now center-stage in the war being waged on labor unions across this country, and we must fight like never before to win this battle and save our union from annihilation.

Betsy DeVos Strips Workers of their Rights

After making headlines over the past year for attacking public-school teachers and students, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and her management team set its sights on the 3,900 workers we represent throughout the department. After months of hostility at the bargaining table, management officials told AFGE Council 252 that it was no longer willing to negotiate.

Management threw out the contract that the council had previously bargained and replaced it with an anti-union edict that strips workers of their previously negotiated rights and protections.

AFGE did not agree to the terms of the illegal document that the Education Department is now masquerading as a collective bargaining agreement.

In fact, members voted to reject the so-called contract on March 5, yet management forced this

illegal document on the membership anyway.

“We’re in the fight of our lives,” Council 252 President Claudette Young told roughly 100 AFGE members and labor allies who rallied outside the Department of Education headquarters on March 28 to protest the department’s assault on its own workers.

“The department has violated our contract and the law and repudiated our contract and is trying to replace it with stripped-down, unilaterally implemented management rules that we call the management edict.”

Management’s illegal document strips workers of all previously negotiated rights and protections, forces employees to file SF-1187s every year to remain a union member, and prevents union leaders and stewards from representing employees by severely restricting the use of representational time.

“Make no mistake, brothers and sisters – this is not an attempt to slow us down. This is an attempt to kill us,” Sharon Harris, executive vice president of AFGE Council 252, told union activists at the rally. “They don’t want a union. They don’t want employees with any rights at all.”

War with Workers



What Does this Mean for You?

What's happening to employees at the Department of Education is part of a larger assault on our members and on public-sector employees across the country:

- Anti-government forces both inside and outside the **Department of Veterans Affairs** are weakening employees' civil service protections and collective bargaining rights.
- At the **Environmental Protection Agency**, management is pushing massive staff and budget cuts and undermining EPA's ability to keep our air and water safe and go after polluters.
- Staffing shortages and budget cuts at the **Bureau of Prisons** are putting our correctional workers in danger daily.

"This administration won't stop until every union has been busted, every contract has been ripped up, and every employee lives in fear of losing his or her job," AFGE National Secretary-Treasurer Joe Flynn told the crowd at the March 28 rally.

In a strong show of unity, dozens of allies from fellow

unions attended the rally and pledged to fight with us, including the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the Communication Workers of America (CWA), the Office of Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), Working America, the Teamsters, the Seafarers International Union of North America, the AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

U.S. Congressman Don Beyer from Virginia also voiced his strong support for our members and all public servants, blasting Secretary DeVos for expanding her vendetta against public education and public teachers into a larger assault on federal labor unions.

AFGE's national office filed an unfair labor practice charge with the Federal Labor Relations Authority on March 12 to stop the Education Department from implementing its illegal management edict and force management to come back to the table.

"It's time to get back to the table so we can negotiate a fair contract on behalf of the workers who keep this agency running," Young said.

Learn how you can help by visiting www.afge.org/SaveEd

Winners & Losers in This Year's Approved Budget

Nearly six months into the current fiscal year, Congress finally approved a spending bill in March to fund the government through the end of September.

The approved budget provides \$1.3 trillion in discretionary spending for defense and non-defense agencies, an 11 percent increase over 2017. These extra funds are dedicated to programs like child care, environmental protection, law enforcement, transportation, veterans' health care, medical research, and fighting the opioid crisis.

With funding secured through the end of September, government agencies can get to work on making long-neglected investments in our people, our programs, and our nation's future—something that's impossible when funding is in question.

The final approved budget is a dramatic rejection of President Trump's proposal to gut critical government services. Rather than slashing funding for non-defense discretionary programs, Congress provided most agencies with their first meaningful budget increase in years.

Here's a rundown of some of the winners and losers:

WINNERS



Public-sector jobs. The bill retains a governmentwide ban on conducting public-private job competitions using the flawed OMB Circular A-76 – meaning agencies are not allowed to outsource your job.



Military communities. Military bases and veterans' hospitals will continue to serve current and retired service members and their families, as Congress rejected calls for Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) studies at DoD and VA facilities.



Our environment. The Environmental Protection Agency was spared the massive, 30 percent budget cut that the Trump administration had proposed, and instead will receive a slight increase to fund key infrastructure projects.



Public health. Congress provided federal agencies with a record \$4.6 billion to fight the opioid epidemic, which killed more than 42,000 Americans in 2016.



Federal facilities. Several agencies will get funding boosts to tackle critical maintenance backlogs, including the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management.



Transportation projects. The Department of Transportation received more than \$27 billion to invest in our nation's neglected infrastructure, including improvements in our air travel, highways, and rail.

LOSERS



Veteran caregivers. Congress rejected efforts to expand benefits to family members and others who care for veterans with severe combat-related injuries. Currently, the benefits apply only to caregivers helping post-9/11 veterans.



D.C. Government: The budget includes \$721 million for D.C. government operations, which is \$35 million less than last year. These funds are used mostly to operate the local court, public defender, and offender supervision services.



International diplomacy: The State Department is the only major agency getting less money this year – roughly a 6 percent cut from the 2017 budget.

Major Victory for Orlando TSA in Privatization Fight



Orlando International Airport is the busiest airport in the country, but in February its airport authority voted to begin the process of contracting out TSA officer jobs at the airport to undertrained private screeners—a move that would put the lives of airline passengers at risk.

When AFGE and TSA Council 100 received news that the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (GOAA) threatened to privatize TSO jobs at an upcoming board meeting, AFGE activists sprung into action. With less than a few weeks' notice, AFGE organized a major campaign to roll back this bad proposal to outsource national security.

AFGE national leaders, the TSA Council, and AFGE Local 556 members met with the GOAA board members ahead of the vote. We held two rallies and invited the press, started a call-in campaign, and recruited and invigorated members just prior to the board vote.

Despite our efforts, on February 21, GOAA voted 6 to 1 to begin the process of handing over control of airport security to a for-profit corporation.

Orlando, which processed 44 million visitors in 2017, ranks number one out of 18 large airports in J.D. Power's 2017 traveler satisfaction study.

The controversial and at times secretive vote by the GOAA board occurred despite public support for TSA Officers by Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio and Representatives Stephanie Murphy, Darren Soto, and

Val Demings of Florida, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, the Teamsters, and the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA International President Sara Nelson.

But, AFGE activists did not let the initial vote stop us. We continued to work with Florida lawmakers and in March, Representative Val Demings organized a special board meeting with Senator Bill Nelson, aides from Senator Marco Rubio's office, and Representative Darren Soto to discuss plans for improving the airport and maintaining a federally-trained TSA workforce.

On April 18, GOAA formally rescinded their February vote and vowed to keep TSA officers at Orlando International Airport— saving more than a thousand federal jobs. GOAA will continue to collaborate with TSA and lawmakers to work through longstanding airport concerns and protect the flying public.

AFGE TSA Council President Hydrick Thomas thanked our allies who stood with us in solidarity during this fight. "We all know how vital our TSA workforce is. Passenger screening should not be contracted out to for-profit companies," said Hydrick Thomas, AFGE TSA Council 100 President. "We are happy we were able to work together to ensure the safety of the flying public in Orlando."

AFGE is grateful to Senators Nelson and Rubio; Congressmembers Demings, Soto, and Murphy; Orlando Mayor Dyer; TSA; and the GOAA board for their work in securing this vote to save local jobs and protect the citizens of the Orlando area.

Under 35 and Joining the Labor Movement

A Staggering Number of Millennials Joined a Union in 2017



Work insecurity and the rise of part-time and contract-only jobs creates uncertainty.

76% of the increase in union membership in 2017 was workers under 35.

Of the 262,000 workers who joined unions in 2017, 3 out of 4 were workers under 35.



Source: epi.org

2018 AFGE National Convention Notice

A FGE will hold nominations and elections for the offices of National President, National Secretary-Treasurer, and National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices at its 41st National Convention, which will be held Monday, Aug. 13 to Friday, Aug. 17 at Paris Las Vegas, 3655 S Las Vegas Boulevard, Las Vegas, NV 89109.

Nominations and elections will be conducted, and protests filed, in accordance with the “AFGE Rules of Conduct for an Election” as provided in Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution, and with the Convention Rules, the current version of which is set forth in Appendix C of the AFGE National Constitution. All offices are for a three-year term.

NOMINATIONS: The convention will convene on Monday, Aug. 13 at 10 a.m. Nominations shall be made by delegates in writing, stating the name of

the candidate and signed by the delegate making the nomination. Under current Convention Rules, nominations shall be received by the Chair of the Election Committee before 4 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 13. No person may be a candidate for more than one office.

QUALIFICATIONS: No person shall be a candidate for, or be elected to, national office unless he or she has been a government employee for three consecutive years; has been a member in good standing of the Federation for the three consecutive years prior to the date of nomination; and is not a member of any labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

ELECTION: Under the current Convention Rules, the polls will open to delegates for the election of officers from 7:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 15. Any required run-off election will be held immediately following the tally of votes.

BOP Locals Raise Awareness of Prison Deaths with Graphic Billboard

Local President Joe Rojas was looking for a shock factor. Something to wake people up to the danger and death facing correctional officers every single day on the job. That's why he, and members of Local 506, decided to place billboards with a grim photo of a coffin in the middle of a busy highway near the largest federal prison in the county—FCC Coleman.



“President Trump says he’s a ‘law and order’ president but he’s cutting law enforcement jobs,” says Rojas. “If you care about us, where is our funding? This year they cut 6,132 [unfilled] positions in our bureau. That’s 177 in our institution alone. Then they froze hiring.”

Personnel resources have been so strained that federal prisons have resorted to practices like “augmentation” which refers to utilizing staff from other departments, such as secretaries, teachers, counselors, accounting staff, welders and plumbers, to work security posts that are normally staffed with correctional officers.

Upon being hired, BOP staff (who are not correctional officers) receive a short, basic corrections training,

but this in no way prepares them for the specialized correctional officer assignments prisons have.

Rojas, who has been president of his local since 2010, refuses to sit back while correctional officers die. “Our role at this time is to go to the media,” says Rojas. He was recently quoted in a New York Times article entitled “Sessions and Kushner Square Off, and Prisoners Hang in the Balance.” He’s working with MSNBC and doing his own press with billboards and print materials meant to elicit shock and action.

“Everyone wants to retire or quit. It’s totally different then when I started in 1995. We had staff. We had strength in numbers. That was 23 years ago. Today, you’re alone with killers and terrorists and pedophiles and there’s nobody to help. It’s toxic and you can feel the tension.”

Join the Conversation on Social Media

Your fellow AFGE members are engaging on social media. Are you? Here is a glimpse of the conversations happening on Facebook.



“I am helping my fellow coworkers feel comfortable standing up for their rights as union members and helping them realize that they matter.”

—Dawn DuMond,
AFGE Local 2018 steward



“We’re trying to save jobs of highly qualified employees over trivial non-issues, due to this legislation. They are front-line employees caring for veterans, not managers.”

—Sue Beckwith,
AFGE VA Local 1219 Vice President

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Events in Memphis Commemorate Assassination of Dr. King



AFGE members pose for a photo before the I AM march.

As hundreds of labor and community activists made their way to their seats in the historic Mason Temple, the audio from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s mountaintop speech filled the sanctuary.

People gathered from across the country to take part in the I AM 2018 Mountaintop Conference. The

convening was organized by AFSCME and the Church of God in Christ, Inc. (COGIC) as a commemoration of the life and legacy of Dr. King.

I AM 2018 marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King and the Memphis sanitation workers' strike where workers boldly declared, "I am a man." The conference took place over two days, culminating in a rally and march. During the sessions attendees heard from leading minds and activists across labor, business, entertainment, faith and social justice sectors about the major issues facing underserved communities of color.

"If 1,300 sanitation workers could go on strike in the Jim Crow South, if Dr. King could give a speech that students still learn about in school 50 years later, then I know we can make our voice heard, too," said Mei-Ling Ho-Shing of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in the Miami Herald.

This Supreme Court Case Could Change Unions Forever

On February 26, we took part in the Janus v. AFSCME rally to stand against corporate-controlled interest groups that are trying to dismantle unions and workers rights in the workplace.

An important case pending in the Supreme Court, Janus v. AFSCME, is an example of how these special interests are trying to destroy the labor movement and our democracy.

In a nutshell, the justices are deciding whether to grant the right to freeloader to nonunion members. Currently, nonunion members who don't pay dues but enjoy the negotiated benefits of union membership such as pay raises and better health and retirement packages are required to pay a fair-share fee.

If the Court rules against AFSCME, the right to freeloader will extend to public sector employees nationwide.



Unions will lose resources, which diminishes their ability to advocate for workers.

What can you do?

Ask your coworkers to join a union! It's the most powerful way to fight back and send a message that they cannot destroy us. The union is everyone. It is as strong as we want it to be. So join a union today and protect our freedom to fight for fair compensation, affordable health care, and retirement security!

VA Bargaining: What's at Stake, and What You Can Do to Help

In 2017 President Trump and Congress delivered a blow to our apolitical civil service. They call it “Accountability,” but we know better. The passing of the “Accountability Act” created the ability to fire workers for any reason, including being seen as disloyal to the administration or speaking up at the job site. This move was a rolling back of due process rights, and another step toward the ultimate end goal—privatizing the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 2018, as AFGE’s National VA Council sits down to negotiate the contract covering 250,000 employees, we could see a further erosion of workplace rights, and an even bigger step toward dismantling the VA. From the number of caregivers per patient in care, to performance standards, to whether employees have a job or any rights at all – we anticipate this to be a hostile negotiation.

Look no further than what’s occurred at the Department of Education as proof. This administration will stop at nothing to dismantle our union and attack federal employees’ rights in the workplace.

The VA has already gone so far as to propose

ground rules that would create a “gag order” on the bargaining team, rendering them unable to communicate to members and employees about what’s going on at the bargaining table. They also requested a 10-day warning in advance of any picketing at VA facilities. These ridiculous requests reveal the VA’s true motivation – to deprive VA employees of their workplace rights. In April, the VA bargaining team failed to show up to a meeting to discuss the next phase of negotiations.

These negotiations will be a tough fight and we will need all hands on deck to win: VA employees to unite to defend the care and benefits our veterans deserve, veterans to fight with us to make sure VA care and service providers have a safe and fair work environment, and all government employees to stand up for their sisters and brothers across all agencies. Our ability to beat back bad proposals will depend on your actions, your coworkers, and mobilization in your communities.

VA employees, the first way you can help is by telling your negotiations team what matters to you! Visit www.afge.org/VAToday to fill out our survey.

It's Voting Season. Here's How to Get Engaged

As government workers, each election is our chance to decide who will have control over our jobs, our pay, and our benefits. We have the chance to support pro-worker and pro-labor candidates this election.

But elections aren’t won and lost in November. They’re won when we register to vote, and raise our voices in local caucuses and primaries.

Here are 4 ways we can get involved before November 6:

Get registered to vote. Every state has different election laws and different deadlines for registration. To learn more about when your state deadlines are, and to register to vote, visit www.vote.org.

Vote in your state primaries. Primaries are the chance to support pro-worker candidates early in the race. To learn when your state primaries are, and what primaries you are eligible to vote in, visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website here: www.ncsl.org.

Make sure we have your contact info. As a highly active union our members can be counted on to help phone bank and canvass in critical elections. To make sure your voice is heard, visit www.afge.org/update.

Volunteer for pro-worker candidates. By knocking on doors and calling our neighbors to get out the vote, we can make sure that our elected officials work for us – not the other way around.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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Washington, DC 20001

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