



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 is Union
Busting!**



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

Divide & Conquer

Behind the administration's attempts to gut your rights – and how we're fighting back.

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

Brothers and sisters,

This administration has dealt with our union in a lawless way, running roughshod over your contractual and statutory rights. They are corrupting the collective bargaining process by refusing to bargain in good faith. Pursuing illegal executive orders enjoined by the court. Imposing management edicts and calling them collective bargaining agreements. Hampering our ability to challenge their actions by failing to fill key positions. And packing the authorities to which we can appeal with anti-union zealots and political cronies who see federal employees as the enemy.

They have set out to systematically and fundamentally break our institutions and laws. And for the moment, it's working. The law no longer works or affords you the rights and protections to have a voice in setting fair conditions of employment. This means we need to change how we fight back.

If we want to win, we can't be content to file grievances and unfair labor practices in a rigged system designed for us to fail. Grievances won't be worth the paper they're written on when the grievance procedure has been stripped from your contract.

If we want to win, we must do what every other union in this country does: We have to come together and stand tall together and let our voices be heard! We must educate one another. Have one-on-one conversations with each other. And we have to build an engaged membership that's ready to take collective action as one. Collective actions have the most power where every member, and every bargaining unit employee, is expected to and does participate.

A number of AFGE locals across the country have received this message, and they are already starting to take this collective action approach.

Here's just one example: At AFGE Local 1963 in Danville, Ill., members in the Department of Veterans Affairs spent a day getting other members to make calls to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie's office in Washington. After just 40 calls, the associate director of the facility actually came down and asked if they would stop as they were tying up the lines in the VA Secretary's office. Eight new members joined the union because of the action.

Do you want to win? If you're a member, reach out today to your local representatives and help move the union in this direction. If you're a union leader or activist, help refocus our union to engage everyone in collective actions.

We can win if we act in union as a union.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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The War on Your Rights at Work



National Veterans Affairs Council President Alma Lee, center, joins with 2,000 protesters at AFGE's Red for Feds rally in Washington last year

Since taking office in January 2017, President Trump has time and again shown disregard for federal employees and for the missions of the agencies where they work. From the highly damaging hiring freeze to the illegal executive orders, this administration's goal is to gut employees' rights at work, bust unions, undermine our government, and privatize most federal functions.

We will only withstand these attacks if we organize and mobilize. We will only withstand these attacks if we educate one another, have one-on-one conversations with each other, engage members of Congress and our local communities, and take to the streets. When we stand united, we empower each other. When we empower each other, we effect change.

Here's a look at what's already happening at various agencies. Make no mistake – it's coming to your agency if we don't stop it now.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Trump's VA Secretary Robert Wilkie submitted a 331-page contract proposal to AFGE's National VA Council on May 2 as part of the contract negotiations that began May 27. The administration's proposal would strip 260,000 VA employees of many of the rights and protections they've won through collective bargaining. The proposal is clearly an attempt to set

VA employees up to fail and pave the way for VA privatization.

Here are a few examples of what the Trump administration wants to do at the VA:

- Eliminate the process that prevents retaliation and harassment, thereby discouraging employees from bringing to light issues that hurt their ability to take care of veterans;
- Severely restrict the use of telework and authorize managers to cancel or change telework agreements for any reason with just 12 hours notice;
- Reduce management accountability by prohibiting employees from grieving unjust disciplinary actions and otherwise limiting their ability to file grievances;
- Allow managers to play favorites by banning collective bargaining over a range of currently permitted issues, including employee reassignments and shift changes, disciplinary actions, performance appraisals, reductions in force, physician and dentist pay, and special accommodations for employees with disabilities;
- Restrict all communications between the union and the agency to the national level, including all grievances and unfair labor practice charges, which could prevent individual employee grievances from being addressed in a timely manner;

- Limit employees' contact with their union representatives by evicting union reps from their offices inside VA facilities and denying them access to computers, laptops, and other equipment used in their representational duties; and
- Require employees to complete a lengthy and intimidating form every year in order to maintain their union membership.

Social Security Administration

The Trump administration tried and failed in court to gut federal employees' rights at work through its illegal executive orders. Now, the administration, through SSA management, is implementing key portions of the illegal executive orders through the collective bargaining process.

The administration used the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) to skirt the court's decision and impose these bad provisions in a contract between SSA and its employees. FSIP, which has the authority to impose a contract if both sides cannot come to an agreement, is stacked with anti-union political appointees who are not fair or impartial.

Contract provisions enforced by SSA:

- Allow management to unilaterally exclude employees from telework, disrupting their lives and schedules;



Members of AFGE Local 2328 protest outside the Hampton VA Medical Center in June

- Eliminate current parking arrangements for all employees, potentially disrupting daily commutes and transit schedules;
- Slash by 80% the amount of time union representatives can spend representing employees;
- Limit employees' access to their union reps by kicking union reps out of the office space currently provided by the agency;
- Eliminate over 1,400 memorandums of understanding and supplemental agreements that were previously part of the collective bargaining agreement; and
- Impose the contract terms for seven years.

Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in June declared it would impose new anti-worker management directives on nearly 9,000 EPA employees. Our union subsequently filed an unfair labor practice charge against the new workplace directives, which took effect on July 8.

Many of the provisions in the directives mirror those contained in three executive orders issued by the Trump administration last year. Trump's workforce executive orders were largely ruled illegal by a federal judge in August.

Provisions the administration imposed on EPA employees:

- Allow management to unilaterally exclude employees from telework, disrupting their lives and schedules;
- Prevent AFGE from providing fair representation to employees by slashing the amount of time union representatives can spend representing employees by 75%;
- Limit employees' access to their union representatives by evicting union representatives from the office space currently provided by the agency;
- Eliminate many memorandums of understanding and supplemental agreements used to enforce employment laws and policies at the worksite; and
- Impose the contract terms for seven years.



The administration has imposed anti-worker management directives on nearly 9,000 employees AFGE represents at the Environmental Protection Agency

“This attack on worker rights is especially egregious at the EPA, where engineers and scientists fight every day to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink,” AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. said.

By hijacking the collective bargaining process to enforce these illegal provisions, the administration is

making it harder for EPA employees to do their jobs, AFGE Council 238 President Gary Morton said.

“We are going to do everything we can to fight this injustice and defend EPA employees from these baseless attacks on their rights and jobs,” Morton said.

4 Ways You Can Fight Back

- 1** Have one-on-one and small group discussions with your coworkers during lunch breaks or off-duty time about the attacks on your pay, benefits, and rights.
- 2** Ask your coworkers to join our union so our voice is stronger at the bargaining table and in the halls of Congress.
- 3** Hold one action every week to shine a spotlight on these attacks. An action could be a petition, Lunch and Learn in the employee breakroom, wearing shirts or stickers to show solidarity, informational picketing outside your facility, a meeting with your members of Congress or their staffs, or a town hall meeting in the community.
- 4** Reach out to allies in your local community and involve them in your actions.

Trump's Plan to Blow up OPM, Civil Service



AFGE activists and members protest across the street from the OPM headquarters June 25

doesn't get his way, taking our members' livelihoods hostage in a ploy to politicize the federal workforce. AFGE, allies, and Congressional leadership took to the streets June 25 to protest the layoff threat.

But this plan would have far-reaching consequences across the federal government. Here's why all federal employees, not just those working at OPM, should be worried: Blowing up OPM would affect

In his continuing quest to undermine the apolitical civil service that keeps our government agencies free from corruption, President Trump has proposed to blow up OPM and move its functions to three different agencies. Trump has already signed an executive order authorizing the transfer of OPM's background checks to the Department of Defense.

The administration is also trying to shift OPM's policy function to Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is part of the Executive Office of the President, and everything else to the General Services Administration (GSA).

Transferring the human resources policy function to the White House is an obvious move to politicize federal employment. Transferring other functions to GSA would allow the administration to contract out more federal jobs.

Unsurprisingly, his plan faced stiff opposition from our union and members of Congress. Now Trump has threatened to lay off 150 OPM employees if he

everyone as new entities, including the anti-worker White House, would have control over the following functions:

- **Classification and assessment:** OPM is responsible for governmentwide classification policy, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and that employees get jobs based on merit, not favoritism.
- **Hiring:** OPM is responsible for governmentwide competitive hiring policies that protect people with disabilities, veterans, and those with certain medical conditions in the hiring process.
- **Diversity:** OPM is responsible for governmentwide diversity and inclusion policies, regulations, and programs that ensure we are recruiting and hiring for a diverse workplace that reflects America.
- **Executive resources and training:** OPM is responsible for ensuring that every agency has merit-based systems, policies, and programs in place to ensure hiring is based on merit.
- **Employee benefits:** OPM administers federal employees' health insurance and retirement benefits.

St. Louis Workers Take Action On Sick Building

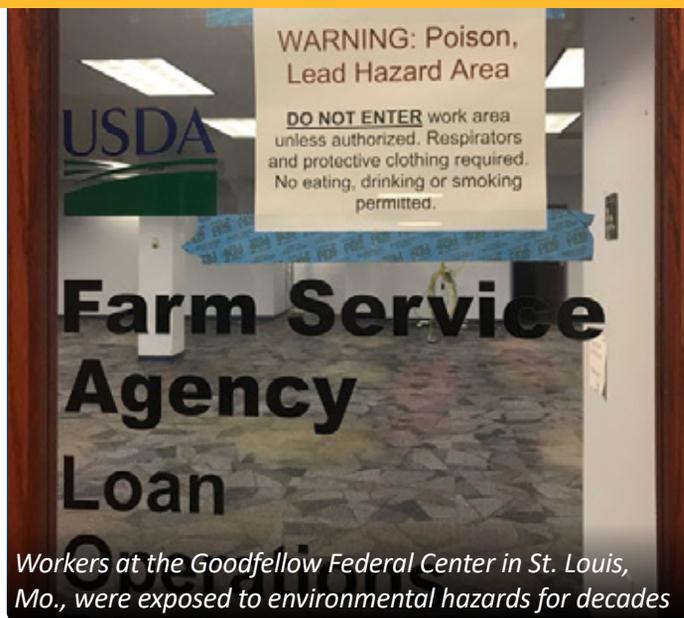
A FGE members came together to demand a safe workplace, and their efforts paid off. The General Services Administration (GSA) announced it will cease operating at the contaminated Goodfellow Complex in St. Louis, Mo., and employees will be moved to a new location.

The Goodfellow federal complex is comprised of 23 buildings and houses 2,000 employees from the Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Social Security Administration (SSA), and GSA. For years, employees working in this complex have raised concerns about the hazardous substances including lead, cadmium, arsenic, asbestos, and other potentially cancer-causing chemicals. Their concerns were ignored even though GSA has been on notice due to multiple reports from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Inspector General, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and its own privately contracted reports.

The years-long failure by managers at GSA to properly mitigate hazardous working conditions at the Goodfellow complex has prompted our union to file a whistleblower disclosure, call for a Congressional investigation, and request the immediate transfer of affected workers from the location.

AFGE locals in the area demanded to bargain with the agencies over employees' temporary duty stations to get everyone out as soon as possible. The locals also sought information on several issues, including the number of bargaining unit employees who have worked at the facility, the chemicals that have exposed to them, the period of exposure, workers' compensation cases, and other critical information. The locals held meetings and townhalls to discuss the issue with employees and discuss steps they could take. The employees also rallied to protest the dangerous working conditions.

Our collective efforts to shine a spotlight on the dangerous working conditions garnered extensive media coverage and prompted GSA to clean up its act.



Workers at the Goodfellow Federal Center in St. Louis, Mo., were exposed to environmental hazards for decades

According to a letter sent to employees from USDA, which is one of the complex's tenants, GSA has informed USDA that the agency is shutting down the complex.

"GSA has also made USDA aware of its plan to cease operating at the Goodfellow Complex in the future. Given the lack of important employee amenities such as the credit union, cafeteria and child care options, and consistent with the Department's One Neighborhood space utilization initiatives, USDA is working with GSA to secure a new location or locations for all USDA employees that currently reside at the Goodfellow Complex," USDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration Donald Brice said in a June 26 letter to employees.

The timeline of the relocation is still unclear as the Veterans Benefits Administration and SSA have not informed their employees of any action. Each AFGE local is encouraged to file a demand to bargain in writing.

"For years, GSA misrepresented the dangers of the contamination and then tried to silence whistleblowers who spoke up. We showed them that wouldn't be ignored, we wouldn't be silenced, and today we prevailed!" said AFGE President J. David Cox Sr. "This is truly an example of the difference a union can make in people's lives."

Timeline of Trump's Anti-Federal Worker Crusade

2017

Jan.

Trump issues hiring freeze to decrease the size of the federal workforce through attrition.



2017

June

Trump signs into law the VA Accountability Act, stripping VA employees of their due process rights.



2018

Feb.

Trump's FY 2019 budget proposes to freeze federal pay, cut benefits, and eliminate due process rights.



2018

May

Trump issues 3 executive orders to gut collective bargaining rights, merit systems, and time spent representing workers.



2018

July

Agencies start kicking union reps out of their offices, canceling all negotiated travels, and limiting time spent representing workers.



2017

May

Trump's first budget proposes cutting \$149 billion in federal employee retirement benefits over 10 years.



2017

Sept.

Trump revokes Obama's executive order that encouraged better labor-management relations.



2018

March

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos replaces labor contract with anti-union directives.



2018

May

AFGE sues administration for attempting to strip workers of their representation rights.



Timeline of Trump's Anti-Federal Worker Crusade

2018

Aug.

Federal judge largely invalidates Trump's anti-worker executive orders.



2018

Sept.

Trump appeals the court decision invalidating his executive orders.



2018

Dec.

Trump shuts down the federal government, forcing employees to go without pay for 35 days.



2019

May

Trump proposes to abolish OPM in effort to politicize the civil service.



2019

June

EPA stops bargaining and imposes anti-worker management edicts.



2018

Aug.

USDA announces plan to transfer hundreds of employees from D.C. in effort to politicize research.



2018

Nov.

EEOC implements some elements of the EOs such as official time limits and harsh new disciplinary action.



2019

March

The VA proposes to eliminate most workplace rights and protection in contract negotiations with AFGE.



2019

May

Federal Services Impasses Panel enforces anti-worker contract provisions on Social Security Administration employees.



Photos from AFGE's VA National Day of Action



AFGE Local 3570, Helena, Mont.

After the administration submitted a contract proposal designed to gut our contract covering 260,000 employees in the Department of Veterans Affairs and pave the way for privatization of the VA, AFGE members sprang into action. We organized 68 rallies and events across the country in early June as part of our AFGE VA National Day of Action, which received widespread coverage. Now, we're continuing to educate and mobilize our members in the fight for a contract that brings us justice, fairness and respect.

If you're ready to get involved in the fight, you can learn more by visiting our campaign website at www.afge.org/VAContract.



AFGE Local 933, Detroit, Mich.



AFGE Local 2152, Reno, Nev.



AFGE Local 1793, Philadelphia, Pa.



AFGE Local 862, Brooklyn, N.Y.

USDA Staff Organize as Administration Proposes Relocation



Workers turn their backs on USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue as he announces relocation

Employee pushback against the proposal is paying off already. Legislation introduced in both the House and Senate would prevent the USDA relocations from moving forward. In addition, House appropriators have included no money for the moves in the department's fiscal 2020 budget.

Now that the employees have organized a union at the worksite, USDA will be required to notify them in advance of any proposed changes to their working conditions

and to bargain with the union in good faith over those proposed changes. In addition, employees in the bargaining unit will gain the legal right to have a union representative present at any meeting in which disciplinary action may result (known as Weingarten rights).

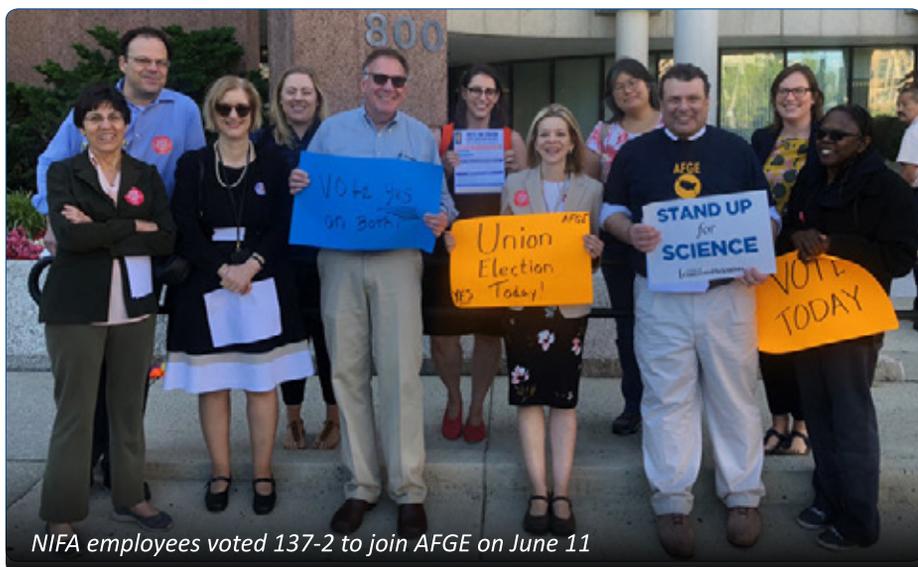
"By organizing at the worksite, employees at NIFA and ERS are using their collective voice to demand a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect the important work they do on the public's behalf," Cox said. "The workers have spoken with a resounding voice; now it's time for the administration to listen."

When the Trump administration proposed relocating employees at two small but critical USDA agencies from the nation's capital, workers responded the best way possible: by using their collective voice to demand a seat at the table.

Employees in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) voted overwhelmingly to join AFGE on May 10, followed one month later by their colleagues in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The ERS unit encompasses 204 employees, while the NIFA unit represents 185 employees. They will join existing AFGE Local 3403, whose membership includes employees at the National Science Foundation.

USDA Secretary Sonny Purdue has proposed relocating both ERS and NIFA outside Washington, D.C., which would affect the majority of employees at both agencies. It's part of a larger effort by the Trump administration to undermine employees' scientific research.

"The proposal to relocate both agencies outside the nation's capital would upend employees' lives and could actually impede their work," AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. said.



NIFA employees voted 137-2 to join AFGE on June 11

News Roundup: Our Union at Work

VA Broke Law by Disclosing Workers' Personal Data



A federal arbitrator ordered the Department of Veterans Affairs to remove an online listing of major disciplinary actions taken against VA employees, ruling that the public posting violates the Privacy Act and our labor contract with the agency. AFGE filed a grievance against the VA in July 2017, immediately after the agency first published online a list of disciplinary actions taken against VA employees dating back to the start of the Trump administration. An arbitrator with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service took over the case when the parties could not reach agreement. The arbitrator determined that the VA violated the Privacy Act by failing to seek or obtain employees' consent before publishing the Adverse Actions Report, and also violated AFGE's labor contract with the VA by publishing employees' personally identifiable information on a public-facing website. He also found that the VA committed an unfair labor practice by failing to satisfy its bargaining obligations with AFGE. Under the ruling, the VA is not allowed to resume publishing the report until it achieves compliance with the Privacy Act, AFGE's collective bargaining agreement, the agency's Handbook, and the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.

DoD Pauses IT Consolidation After AFGE Protest



Weeks after AFGE charged the Department of Defense with failing to properly consult the union over the planned transfer of more than 1,200 information technology employees, DoD announced it was postponing the moves through at least the end of the fiscal year. On May 20, AFGE filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) charge with the Federal Labor Relations Authority over DoD's failure to notify AFGE or seek the union's input about its plans to transfer IT workers from the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) to the Defense Information Services Agency (DISA), which is part of a larger plan to put DISA in charge of more than 1,200 IT positions currently assigned to individual DoD agencies. Under Title 5 of the U.S. Code, federal

agencies are required to consult with labor unions over any proposal that would substantively change employment conditions, provided that those unions represent a substantial number of agency employees but are not the exclusive representative at the agency.

Hire More Staff, EEOC Council Tells Chair



Hiring more staff to help the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission address a growing workload of #MeToo discrimination claims should be the first order of business for newly confirmed EEOC Chair Janet Dhillon, AFGE Council 216 said as it issued a Top 10 list of priorities facing the chair. Sexual harassment claims were up 13.6 percent in 2018, sparked by the #MeToo movement, while EEOC's workforce dropped below 2,000 employees for the first time since before 1980. President Trump's proposed budget for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1 would slash the EEOC's historically low budget by \$23.7 million and cut staff by another 180 positions, including mediators, judges, intake representatives, and 50 investigators.

Administration Drops Plans to End Job Corps Program



The Trump administration abruptly withdrew plans to close or privatize the U.S. Forest Service's Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers in June following opposition from employees and bipartisan members of Congress. In late May, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta announced a plan to close nine of the centers and transfer the remaining 15 to the Department of Labor to be run by private contractors. The administration's plan would have eliminated jobs for nearly 1,100 Forest Service employees who manage the centers and provide training to thousands of at-risk youth. Because of the location of the employees, the move would have disproportionately affected rural communities already strapped for resources. After lobbying by AFGE members, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle called on the administration to preserve the Forest Service Job Corps program.

AFGE Celebrates Pride



Women's and Fair Practices Attorney Anneke Robinson

National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Jeremy Lannan

In celebration of Pride Month and in recognition of the struggles still facing members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQIA+) community, AFGE staff, members, and officers proudly joined with more than 200 contingents of floats, vehicles, and walkers in this year's Capital Pride Parade. AFGE has been a sponsor of the Capital Pride Celebration since 2015.



AFGE activists march in this year's Capital Pride Parade on June 8



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