



# Dignity. Fairness. Respect.



Out of Many/One Union  
AFGE NVAC/AFL-CIO

Dear AFGE Leader,

May 2019

STOP and read this letter!

By now you have read the agency proposals to gut our contract and our rights in the workplace. It's time to fight back!

It's time to engage every VA employee about the horrendous attacks on them and the VA by this Administration. These attacks are intentional. These attacks are aimed at dismantling our union and the rights of all VA employees to be treated fairly and with respect in the workplace. These attacks are ultimately aimed at dismantling and privatizing the VA and the care for veterans to private health care providers. These actions by this Administration will result in less care for the veterans and severely damage the work-lives and careers of the employees.

We cannot successfully beat back these attacks by simply using the processes of Ch. 71, Title 5.

We must step outside the comfort of Ch.71 and talk to all the employees about the attacks on them, the VA and the care they provide to veterans.

We must engage every employee by sharing information, listening to their concerns and asking them to stand up together and defend their livelihoods and the wonderful work they do. These are their livelihoods, their careers, their workplaces, their contract, their rights and their union.

Union power flows from the employees banding together in support of their collective voice through collective actions. We have witnessed workers around the country taking collective actions and the union power they wielded together to achieve their goals.

Engaging our members and the other employees to become involved and join together in collective action is not what AFGE locals normally do. But now we must! It isn't quick or easy. We can no longer leave the power of member actions outside of our toolbox.

We need to begin a step-by-step process of engagement with the employees and our members.

First, set-up meetings everywhere you can in every facility to explain what is happening regarding the contract, their rights and the privatization of the VA. Invite all employees in the bargaining unit to attend. At the meeting you will discuss the management proposals to gut the contract and ask for their 3 top concerns. Use the sign-in sheets to ID who has attended and who still needs to be contacted.

Meeting materials including meeting announcements, meeting handouts, the employee survey and talking points for your use in the meeting can be found on the web at [www.afge.org/VAContract](http://www.afge.org/VAContract).

Second, make copies of the agency proposals in the break rooms so employees can read them.

Third, begin creating an employee map of your facility by work area and shift. Ask each officer and steward to ID the employees in their areas by name, job, shift and where they work on the blank form. Mark each one that is a member. Mark each one that comes to the meeting on the contract. Mark each one that fills out the survey. Make sure you have an up to date bargaining-unit list.

The goal is to try and reach everyone in your facility. On this first pass, not everyone will attend. Hold a second round of meetings to increase the number of people that are touched and heard the message. Keep the lists so you can check off the names on the “map” the local will building.

Fourth, create a process whereby officers or stewards can follow-up with those who did not attend. Assign names to the officers and stewards to talk with them, get their concerns and report back.

During the meetings and individual outreach, ask any potential member to join. Tell them these are their rights, it’s their contract and their workplace that will get worse if they do not act. They need to join with their fellow employees to make it better.

Fifth, we have only a little time to build our member/employee engagement process that will build our collective union power. As we build our power, we will take larger collective actions to make our collective voice heard. On June 5th, the Council and AFGE are calling for a National Day of Action in support of a contract that ensures Dignity, Fairness, Respect. More details will be forthcoming.

Let’s start with these first steps. The NVAC will begin bargaining in May and may continue through December 2019. We will add more steps and materials as we move forward.

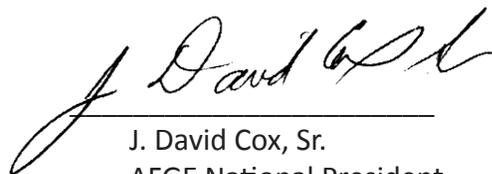
Finally, we will be holding a town hall call for VA local and council leaders on Thursday May 23 at 8pm eastern time. Look for an email and/or text with the information.

It’s union time! It’s time to build our power! It’s time to fight for a good contract! If your local is in and committed, let us know by signing the pledge now at [www.afge.org/VAContractPledge](http://www.afge.org/VAContractPledge).

In Solidarity,



Alma Lee  
NVAC #53 President



J. David Cox, Sr.  
AFGE National President

