

Presidents Corner

I would like to thank each and every member of AFGE Local 1869 for your support. Without you, we don't exist. You may sometimes feel overlooked or taken for granted, but I assure you this is **never** the case. **YOU** being a member of AFGE Local 1869 is very important indeed. Again, I would just like to say thank you very much. We always need more members. Our strength is made up of membership. The more members we have, the louder our voice is, and the better the outcome will be as an end result to many challenges facing us now and in the future. Talk with the non-members that you know, and let them know about all the good things we do for everyone. Let them know about the numerous benefits that AFGE provides for all members, and ensure that all potential members know that we are here for them every working day of our lives.

Folks, I just want to reiterate on something. Please remember that I am always here to help you. I have a great group of trained Stewards that are eager and willing to help when the need arises. We also have many Members who actively participate in several of the Locals events, training, meetings etc.. We can answer your questions and help you with all kinds of situations that may frustrate you. Our complete Volunteer Staff is ready and able to serve you when the time arises. Please remember, we are always looking for a few more good men and women to step up to the plate.

Challenge Reminder.....

We are on our way!

We have signed up 36 members since the contest started and are nearing our goal! We have done a great job so far but still have a ways to go. Get on the band wagon and sign up a new member, TODAY!

AFGE National and the Fifth District are once again offering **BONUS BUCKS** beginning 6 November through 28 February. That means for each member you sign up you receive \$40.00 from the National office. What a great way to help your Local and at the same time make some extra spending money.

The Executive Board to extend our Membership Drive contest through 28 February to match the BONUS BUCKS drive. This gives you our members a great opportunity to invite your co-workers to join your Local and increases your chances of winning some serious money.

Sign up 10 new members and get \$400.00 in **BONUS BUCKS** plus \$500.00 for winning our Membership Drive puts \$900.00 in your pocket.

The potential is only limited by the amount of effort you put into recruiting new members!

Again, our goal is 400 members! We have from now until February 28th to reach this goal.

Here are the rules:

- 1) This is open to all current and new members
- 2) The member who signs up the most new members will receive \$400.00.
- 3) The 400th member to sign up will receive \$400.00.
- 4) The member who signs up the 400th member will receive \$100.00.
- (5) The Local President is not eligible to win.

Membership numbers will be classified information until the day that we reach 400.

Go out and show pride in your membership in *your* Local. Spread the word, sign up new members and earn some spending cash. You have the potential to put \$900.00 or more in your pocket.

We could reach our goal today if each member would just sign up one new member!

Monthly Membership Drawing

Ricky Buggs missed out on the Monthly Drawing. It was a \$500.00 Jackpot ladies and gentlemen. It could have been \$500.00 in his pocket. It could have been \$500.00 in your pocket. You have to be present to win. Just a reminder, the President is NOT eligible for this drawing. Retired members are always welcome to come to the monthly meetings. They are held **every second Tuesday** of each month at 4:30pm unless there are circumstances that will not permit the meeting to take place. Bad weather, natural disasters etc.....All members are welcome to attend the Monthly Meeting retired or not.

Next months drawing will be for \$600.00

Legislative Corner

On February 6, 2007, the [Employee Free Choice Act](#) was introduced in the House with [231 cosponsors!](#) The legislation, which has bipartisan support, would give workers greater freedom to make their own decisions about joining a union and would create stiffer penalties for companies who break labor laws.

America's working people are struggling to make ends meet and our middle class is disappearing. So it's important to remember that **the best opportunity working men and women have to get ahead economically is by uniting with co-workers to bargain with their employers for better wages and benefits.**

- Workers who belong to unions earn 29 percent more than nonunion workers;
- They are 62 percent more likely to have employer-provided health coverage;
- They are four times more likely to have pensions.

More than half of U.S. workers—58 million—say they would join a union right now if they could.

Contact your Congressional Representatives and tell them you want them to support this bill!!!!

HR-82, by Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., to repeal the government pension offset and windfall elimination provision, which reduce Social Security benefits for many CSRS system retirees is of special interest for all civil service employees.

Write to your representatives and urge their support.

HR-103, by Rep. Jo Ann Davis, R-Va., proposes to create a presumption that certain types of disability of a federal employee in fire protection activities resulted from performance of official duties.

Fire fighting is a risky business at best, the guidelines on what defines disability due to job performance should be crystal clear!

All Union Brothers and Sisters need to take an active role in keeping the lines of communication open with all of our Congressional representatives. This is especially true here in

South Carolina where the Democrats did not fair as well as in the rest of the country.

It is our responsibility as civil service employees and Union members to speak up to protect our jobs, benefits, retirement and our rights!

What They Do In Our Name?

Clayton Seufert

Legislative Committee, AFGE Local 1869

Did you hear about the amendment in the Senate called SA 116 in late January?

SA 116 was submitted by Republican Senator Allard of Colorado. Text from the amendment is below, but basically it would have **cancelled the federal minimum wage and left it up to the states.**

Our own South Carolina **Senators Jim DeMint and Lindsey Graham voted "YEA" for this one.**

Not sure how that would have left workers here in South Carolina, since our state has no minimum wage law. But I imagine Governor Sanford would have immediately offered jobs to every resident at the state minimum wage (\$0.00); and added the fact that he brought the South Carolina unemployment rate to zero to his "Sanford For Governor" web page.

I hope my fellow union members will remember this side of Senators Graham and DeMint when we go to the polls in 2008 and 2010.

Extracted from: The Library of Congress - THOMAS at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

(23 Jan 07 Congressional Record)

SA 116. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2, to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of section 2, add the following:

(c) State Flexibility.--Section 6 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) State Flexibility.--Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an employer shall not be required to pay an employee a wage that is greater than the minimum wage provided for by the law of the State in which the employee is employed and not less than the minimum wage in effect in that State on January 1, 2007.”.

Legislation Issues

NSPS is still the major issue facing civil service employees. While we await the outcome of the appeal filed by the

Department of Defense we do not need to become complacent.

As Union members we need to keep this issue in the forefront of our minds and openly discuss the issue with our co-workers.

As many of us draw closer to retirement we also need to be involved in issues such as "Premium Conversion" which would allow federal retirees to pay for health insurance with "pre-tax" dollars. Then there is the GPO, Government Pension Offset and the WEP, Windfall Elimination Provision; both of which affects our Social Security benefits by penalizing us for our federal service. Even if we worked in the private sector and paid in our required quarters to qualify for Social Security benefits. It could even cause our spouses to lose part of their Social Security benefit when they receive an annuity from

These are just a few of the issues facing us as federal employees and future federal retirees. Get involved and communicate with your Congressional representatives, let them know what you want them do!

The appropriations committees of Congress are being reorganized by the new leadership, in part to end a situation that existed in the last several years in which the House and Senate had different numbers of subcommittees on those panels. As part of the reshuffle, there will be a change in jurisdiction over federal pay and central management agencies such as OPM, OMB and GSA, as well as appeals agencies such as MSPB and FLRA. That will be moved from what had been the Transportation-Treasury subcommittee to a new Financial Services and General Government subcommittee, which also will oversee financial and regulatory agencies. The effect could be to somewhat raise the profile of federal employee issues in the appropriations panels, since those issues often were overshadowed by major transportation, housing and judicial issues that were under the jurisdiction of the Transportation-Treasury panel. The chairman of the House subcommittee will be Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y while Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., will head the Senate subcommittee.

Thank you "New House of Representatives"

The new House of Representatives has passed a bill that repeals an authority granted in the 2001 Aviation and Transportation Security Act giving the TSA chief the ability to reject collective bargaining.

Then-TSA Administrator James Loy exercised that authority in 2003, prohibiting collective bargaining because of screeners' role in national security. Now it is up to the Senate to pass a similar bill. Please contact you senators and urge them to introduce and support a bill

giving these 56,000 federal employees the right that they were wrongfully denied.

Representation

FANTASTIC!!!!!!!!!!

AFGE Local 1869 does it again!

MSPB has ruled in our favor against the wrongful termination of the commissary employee at the Naval Weapons Station store.

The employee was made whole and received back pay from October 2004 when she was terminated through January 14, 2007. Her leave was reinstated and her records were cleared of any mention of the incident. She was offered reinstatement of her position but she declined the offer.

This makes two employees which Local 1869 saved their jobs and two fourteen day suspensions overturned.

Local 1869 has shown what they can do for you the employees, now step-up and help strengthen Local 1869.

More good news!

We filed two ULPs against Support Services of America (SSA) the base cleaning contractor and recently received notice from The National Labor Relations Board (private sector) that they have issued a charge against the company. This means that our claims against the company for failure to bargain and reverse bargaining were founded by the agency.

Now the company has to answer the charges and negotiate a settlement with the Local. More to follow!

437 AMXS has given yet another notice of intent to reorganize. They have proposed moving aircraft mechanics from building 72 and consolidating them with the mechanics in building 74.

It was managements plan to move the personnel into a room that was an unconditioned space (no heat or AC) which did not have space for duct work to be installed. Plus, they did not have the funding to upgrade the space.

This space was designed for occupancy of four people. Management was going to put 25 – 30 people in the space each shift.

Local 1869 has answered with a letter of intent to negotiate. Our negotiating team has met with management and

presented our arguments against the changes to working conditions. We have heard nothing further from management.

It seems that AMXS is constantly reorganizing. I wonder how they accomplish any work? **It must be dedicated employees!**

The issue of Charleston County Sheriff's Department patrolling CAFB has yet to be settled

Management has not replied to our last offer to compromise. Until they do, we will consider this issue settled in our favor since the sheriff is not patrolling on the base. You most probably will see them outside the Rivers gate area, though.

Keep up the pressure!!!!

Are We Under Attack? (the continuing saga)

Disclaimer:

All comments in this column are made to raise the awareness of our members. By no means am I trying to tell anyone what to think or do. I am only attempting to bring to the forefront issues that I feel should be of concern to us as union brothers and sisters. There is much for us to gain in solidarity and much to lose without it.

YES, On all fronts!

Wednesday January 10, 2007

How many of you listened to the President's speech?

Did you hear the part about civil service employees? It was just one sentence but it could have a huge effect on your lives!

We also need to examine ways to mobilize talented American civilians to deploy overseas, where they can help build democratic institutions in communities and nations recovering from war and tyranny.

I believe this was tried by the British many years ago. They called it colonization.

By Karen Rutzick
krutzick@govexec.com

Ron Ault formed the coalition powering organized labor's unexpected resurgence.

Ron Ault, a brash, outspoken Arkansas shipbuilder turned labor leader, changed the fortunes of federal unions with a

phone call. President of the giant Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, Ault had come to the Virginia suburbs of Washington in February 2004 for the first meeting between Pentagon managers and union reps about the new personnel system and work rules the department had won authority to write several months before in the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act.

As union leaders tell it, Pentagon officials were dictatorial. They made it clear that the meetings, which Congress required, would be run their way. There would be no real negotiation on the new rules. Ginger Groeber, at the time Defense deputy undersecretary for civilian personnel policy, said existing collective bargaining agreements would be annulled.

"You might as well throw gasoline on me and set me on fire when you do me that way," Ault says of that first session. "There's no way you're going to tell me the process I'm going to participate in without some kind of input from me."

Unions had lobbied hard against the new law, but in the wake of Sept. 11, the argument for managerial flexibility won out. Congress did, however, include a clause that required the Pentagon to preserve collective bargaining - largely undefined - for 750,000 Defense civilian employees. And they required managers to include unions in writing the regulations, a process called "meet-and-confer." So, though union leaders were skeptical going into the meeting, they were not prepared for the level of anti-union talk they heard.

As the meeting continued, Ault rose from his chair and rushed into the hallway, where he called the public relations director of the Metal Trades Department - a coalition of 5 million members of 20 unions - and dictated an angry letter. He had it faxed to the meeting and every union leader in attendance signed it. "This was at 5 o'clock in the afternoon," Ault says. "The next morning, every member of Congress had one personally in their lap."

The letter might have had marginal effect on the National Security Personnel System, but it was the beginning of a powerful new partnership between federal and private sector unions.

CYNICAL ACT

Six years after it began, the Bush administration effort to curb the influence of federal unions is floundering. In large part, that's because President Bush's policies had an unintended side effect - they united fractious unions and garnered outside support. Unfortunately for the Bush team, their anti-union campaign also coincided with an upswing in the power of public sector unions within the labor movement.

Federal unions can't bargain over pay and they can't strike, but they do have what former Office of Personnel Management official George Nesterzuk calls "nuisance value." Nesterzuk, mastermind of the new Defense Department personnel system, says unions can tie up a policy by bargaining over it for ages in hundreds of local bargaining units. For example, it took years for every bargaining unit to negotiate the use of official charge cards for travel expenses at Defense.

One of Bush's first official acts as president was an executive order dissolving labor-management partnerships developed in the Clinton years. Then came proposed reforms at the Homeland Security and Defense departments, whose employees comprise half the federal workforce. One of the tenets of reform was that department officials should be able to void collective bargaining agreements at any time, even after they were negotiated.

Stewart Acuff, organizing director of the AFL-CIO, calls the attempt to change collective bargaining rules "the most cynical act this administration has done." "The whole labor movement saw that as an assault," he says. "And we saw it for what it was: a very, incredibly cynical attempt to greatly weaken the labor movement starting where they had the first opportunity, which is in the federal government."

On Dec. 8, 2006, at a rally in Washington a month after Democrats took over Congress, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney laid out his "demands" for the first 100 hours of the next session. Still high on electoral success, he sought the usual labor objectives: a higher minimum wage, lower prescription drug prices, trade laws that stem outsourcing of U.S. jobs and increased student loans. But he added a new one: "Restore the collective bargaining rights stolen from federal employees by the Bush administration," Sweeney said.

GATHERING MOMENTUM

Sweeney's speech was just one event during an AFL-CIO weekend conference intended to keep up momentum after the electoral victory. The final speaker was Kimberly Kraynak, who took the stage to a standing ovation in the ballroom of the Hyatt Regency. She is a Transportation Security Administration security officer in Pittsburgh who is organizing workers in spite of the administration's refusal to let her do so. In 2003, then-TSA Administrator James Loy issued a directive that TSA screeners are prohibited from collective bargaining under the 2001 Aviation and Transportation Security Act. He said collective bargaining would hinder the national security role that screeners play.

"We will win the fight for these folks," Acuff proclaimed as Kraynak stepped to the podium. The American Federation of Government Employees, an AFL-CIO affiliate and the largest federal union with about 225,000 dues-paying members and contracts covering about 600,000 employees, is organizing TSA workers even though they can't yet collectively bargain.

Kraynak, whose father and grandfather were both leaders in the United Steelworkers of America, came to Washington to ask the AFL-CIO to support her efforts. "Other agencies within the Department of Homeland Security such as Border Patrol and Customs and Immigration are permitted to unionize," she said. "Apparently, allowing airport screeners the right to form a union is a risk to national security."

The audience hung on her words, booing that line, applauding others and giving her a standing ovation. As she walked off the stage, Tim Waters of Pittsburgh, the Steelworkers' rapid response director, was one of many to approach her. "Let me know if there is anything I can do to help," Waters said.

"We're sending our people through that airport all the time. There should be something we can do."

The AFL-CIO already is doing something. In November, the United Nations International Labor Office issued a ruling that the 43,000 baggage screeners at TSA have the right to bargain collectively. AFGE, with help from an AFL-CIO grant of nearly \$300,000, petitioned the United Nations on behalf of a few hundred TSA members it already had signed up.

Sweeney and AFGE President John Gage issued a joint statement the day the U.N. ruling came out. "The AFL-CIO and AFGE join the international community in its recognition that national security and worker rights are not mutually exclusive," Sweeney and Gage said. "At a time when airport screeners need a voice on the job to highlight where improvements can be made in our national security, the Bush administration continues to stifle dialogue."

And then, in January, came another victory. The House Democratic majority passed its very first piece of legislation, enacting leftover recommendations of the 9/11 commission. Folded into the bill was language granting TSA screeners collective bargaining rights. The White House strongly opposed the provision. Noting that the British government immediately imposed new procedures for screeners after foiling an airline bombing plot in August 2006, administration officials said they would not be able to unilaterally change workplace rules if U.S. screeners were unionized.

AFL-CIO representatives say they are putting the coalition's weight behind AFGE's efforts to organize TSA because it's a human rights issue. But at a time when the United Auto Workers membership has dropped from 700,000 in 2001 to 550,000 in 2005, the 43,000 potential new union members at TSA would be a welcome addition.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

While the UAW was losing 150,000 + members, AFGE gained about 25,000. Public sector unions are becoming increasingly important to the labor movement. Union membership in the private sector reached a low of 7.8 percent in 2005. At the same time, more than 36 percent of federal, state and local government workers were unionized, according to a September report from the anti-union Evergreen Freedom Foundation. "The realization that this is where unions are going is just starting to dawn on people in the last couple of years," said Michael Reitz, one of the report's authors. "It won't be very long before a majority of union members nationwide are in government."

Gage, who has a seat on the AFL-CIO executive board, says: "When you're on the AFL [board], you try to look at all of labor, and certainly we've been able to be somewhat of a steady influence, in terms of membership anyway. The steelworkers, some of these great unions, have really been hit."

There's another factor in the numbers game. When the Service Employees International Union, the Teamsters and five other unions took 6 million members out of the AFL-CIO and created the Change to Win coalition in September 2005, most

federal unions stayed. Federal employees make up a bigger chunk of those remaining in the AFL-CIO.

About 40 percent of the AFL-CIO is made up of public sector unions now; some 360,000 members are nonpostal federal employees. (The National Treasury Employees Union, with about 78,000 members the second-largest federal union, is not affiliated with the AFL-CIO.) What's more, at least 16 of 50 AFL-CIO member unions have federal members.

Some are in places you wouldn't expect. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has 42,000 federal members, the Seafarers International Union of North America has 5,000 and the American Federation of Teachers has 1,000 in overseas Defense Department schools. Only 10 AFL-CIO unions are larger than AFGE. Only two gained more members than AFGE between 2001 and 2005 and both were public sector: the Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The public sector's increasing clout comes as labor's overall influence dwindles. As senior analyst Bret Jacobson of the anti-labor group, the Center for Union Facts, put it: "The whole pie has shrunk, but the government has a bigger piece of it." And federal employee unions still are a relatively small part of the labor movement. AFSCME's numbers overshadow AFGE by a long shot, accounting for much of the public sector's dominance. AFSCME, however, understands the problems of federal workers as perhaps few other unions can.

36 UNIONS, 750,000 EMPLOYEES

With the changing demographics of the labor movement as a backdrop, Ault went to work forming a new coalition. Along with some of the other big federal unions - including AFGE, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, and the National Federation of Federal Employees, which is affiliated with the huge International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers - he created the United Defense Workers Coalition. It has one rule: no raiding fellow unions. And with 36 unions representing 750,000 Defense Department employees, that means a lot.

Matthew Biggs, legislative director for the Professional and Technical Engineers who has served as the spokesman for the coalition since its inception, says that rule seeks to prevent one or two unions from cutting a deal with the Pentagon and swapping collective bargaining rights for more members. "We wanted to guard against any kind of divide and conquer," says Biggs. "Can you imagine what it would be like if we had even one union going to Capitol Hill saying this [National Security Personnel System] would be great?"

With one exception, there has been no raiding among Defense Department unions since the coalition began. The National Association of Independent Labor was kicked out of the coalition for alleged raiding, but still sits in on the meetings and could choose to come back in. Raiding uses up precious dues dollars and weakens unions as a whole. NFFE lost its Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers, among others, to the AFT in a raid. That's why it chose to affiliate with the Machinists and gain protection as part of the AFL-CIO. "It's a snowball effect," says NFFE president Rick Brown. "You lose

membership, you lose revenue. Then you spend dues dollars fending off unions raiding you."

The coalition has another rule for making decisions: everything by consensus. "It's all voluntary," says Brown. "You can get up and walk away anytime you want. You're not compelled, you're not chartered. The commitment of the top folks of all unions - these are very strong-willed, Type A personalities that have to compromise and acquiesce at times - to keep that going for almost three years; I've never seen anything like it."

Those Type A personalities collected a total of \$50,000 from a number of member unions quickly at the outset of the coalition. Ault asked AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka to match the contribution, which he did. Then Ault asked Sweeney to lend AFL-CIO legislative representative Byron Charlton to lead the coalition. "We decided after a couple of meetings we needed a chairperson and not necessarily a person who had a dog in the fight," Ault says.

Ault and Biggs say Sweeney was supportive from the get-go. "He understood it very well," Biggs says. "It didn't take much convincing. The only part that took convincing was encouraging him to put Byron in charge of a coalition that included non-AFL unions." Sweeney ultimately agreed and with \$100,000 in the bank, Charlton took over.

A TASTE OF VICTORY

Power in numbers has driven some wins for the unions. The most obvious is that four years after the first law was passed, new collective bargaining rules at the Homeland Security and Defense departments have not been enacted, and new civilian personnel systems have not taken hold in either organization. After unions jointly sued both departments, a number of judges have ruled the systems don't meet the intent of Congress to protect collective bargaining.

Out of their relationship in the coalition, the Professional and Technical Engineers, AFGE, NFFE and the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers formed a mini-coalition to combat a planned public-private job competition to operate locks and dams for the Army Corps of Engineers. In mid-November, Corps officials called off the competition, saying they will undertake an internal reorganization instead.

"Just working with these people for three years now, you get to going out to lunch, you talk about business," Biggs says. "We were out to lunch with IBEW and NFFE and [found out that] IBEW had a relationship with Trent Lott. So we all went in and talked to Sen. Lott" about opposing the Army Corps' competition.

When William H. Young, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, responded to Bush's signing of the first postal reform bill in decades, he pointed out in a message to NALC members that the bill "preserves our collective bargaining rights - rights that many workers at Homeland Security and the Department of Defense lost earlier in the Bush years."

Even employees at the Government Accountability Office, which employs white-collar accountants and statisticians, are

in talks to unionize. Their agency has been at the forefront of personnel reforms, leaving the General Schedule pay system in 2005 in favor of pay for performance.

After the midterm elections, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson wrote to John Gage saying that the election of Democrat Ciro Rodriguez over Republican incumbent Henry Bonilla in the 23rd district of Texas was AFGE's doing. Rodriguez had served in Congress before and was very supportive of federal employee issues. "I want to thank you, John, because you believed it could be done and you provided the money and staff needed to make it happen," Chavez-Thompson said. "I lay this victory on the doorstep of AFGE. I want to personally tell you how grateful I am."

How much pull Big Labor will have in the 110th Congress is still unclear. But with the AFL-CIO bundling the reversal of collective bargaining rules in DHS, TSA and the Pentagon into its broader goals, federal unions have a real shot at regaining lost rights and a seat at the table in major departments.

Defense Coalition members gathered in the ceremonial courtroom of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on Dec. 11 to hear their lawyers argue in another round of appeals on the Defense collective bargaining system. The three-judge panel will decide in the next several months whether the Pentagon must rewrite its rules and start the cycle of meet-and-confers all over again. This time, management will face an emboldened coalition of unions speaking with one voice.

What's a Contractor Worth?

The 100,000 government contractors working in Iraq are earning an average of \$98,387 a year, according to [a survey](#) of about 2,000 contractors done by ClearanceJobs.com.

Contractors in Iraq have seen a 6.4 percent salary increase over the last six months, however, ClearanceJobs.com points out that the \$98,387 figure does not include signing bonuses, tax-exempt status, and additional danger pay.

Do you the civil service employee get a signing bonus?
Additional danger pay?

No, you get your regular pay plus \$3.58 per diem for incidentals.

Pentagon Officials REDUCE the size of the Pay Pool funding for senior executives.

Last year performance based pay awards were capped at 15%. This year they will be capped at 10% with a possible 12% on a limited basis.

It should come as no surprise that these senior executives are not happy.

Yes, it is beginning; just as we have predicted! One of the major goals of NSPS and Pay for Performance was and is to reduce the federal payroll.

Stay tuned, this will not be the end of this type of action.

Big Business sucking up your tax dollars, again!!

The property and casualty insurers have their hand out seeking are looking for tax payers to pay their insured losses in the event of a terror attack.

This is after the industry realized a record profit of almost \$60 Billion in 2006. How have they managed such a feat? They have systematically overcharging consumers, cutting back on coverage, underpaying claims and getting the tax payer to pick up some of the tab on high risk losses.

This is quite evident here in the coastal Charleston area as we all pay higher premiums for our dwellings to help cover the insurer's losses in the event a hurricane wipes out any of the millionaire mansions on the beaches of our coast.

As you read this some insurers are not renewing home owner insurance on Charleston area homes.

NSPS NEWS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We continue to work diligently on NSPS issues. Please do not get complacent about NSPS just because we persevered in Federal Court. That was only the first battle; the war is far from over. We still need to be in constant contact with our representatives to assure a fair system over all.

FOURTEEN Months and counting!

DoD still refuses to answer AFGE's formal Request for Information!!!!

AFGE filed a formal request regarding the implementation costs for NSPS. DoD refused our request under 5 USC 7114. AFGE still has a Freedom of information request in the works.

We now have Congress asking questions about the costs. Keep writing and calling your congress persons and let them know that you also want to know how your tax dollars are being spent. You are a tax payer, besides being a government employee. You have a right to know!

They have replied to our request but want us to pay over \$34,000.00 for the information.

MEMBER'S Library

2006 CSRS Retirement Guide
2006 FERS Retirement Guide
2006 Turbo Tax Deluxe

How to write a federal resume
2005 Federal Employees Handbook (on CD)
2006 Federal Employees Almanac (on CD)
Federal Manager's Handbook
Estate Planning Guide for Federal Employees
Retired Military Personnel Handbook
Health Insurance Guide for Federal Employees
Military to Federal Career Guide (1)
2006 Federal Personnel Guide
Federal Employees Legal Survival Guide
Real Estate Guide for Federal Employees (on computer)
Understanding the Federal Government's Survivor Benefits *
* = New

Turbo tax 2006 state and federal is available in the office for your use!!!!

All of these publications are available for you our Members to use. You may sign them out anytime. If there is something you would like for us make available, please let us know.

(1) Let the military troops that you work with know about this new book. They are welcome to sign the book out to help prepare for a civil service career. They are potential members!

Regular Business Meetings

Regular monthly business meetings are held the **second Tuesday of each month at 4:30PM**, in the union office located in Building 636, 205 W. Stewart Avenue, Charleston Air Force Base, SC.

For more information, please contact the union office at (843) 963-5765 or 552-8249.

February Anniversaries

Ms. Mildred Gross	1969
Mr. Charles Martin	1986
Mr. Richard Keadle	1992
Mr. Brian Fry	1995
Mr. Bruce Stufflebeam	1995
Mr. Solomon Grant Jr	1996

Ms. Ronail Dowling	1997
Mr. Henry Pope	1997
Ms. Susan Solesbee	1997
Mr. Joseph Snyder	1997
Ms. Debra Hanks	2003
Mr. Dean Miller	2003
Ms. Juliene Oliver	2004
Ms. Kimberly Zellner-Green	2005
Ms. Shirley Wiggins-White	2005
Mr. Gary McCall	2005
Mr. Freddie Himes	2006
Ms. Pamela Ray	2006
Mr. Alphonzo Crocker	2006
Ms. Nancy Marsolick	2006
Mr. Thomas Kelly	2006

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<http://www.govexec.com>
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<http://www.laboreducator.org>
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<http://spewingforth.blogspot.com>
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South Carolina Fair Share 803-252-9813

Stay on top of the issues at the state house and how they affect you!

Know what your state representatives are doing, saying and how they are voting!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Remember:

Together we have a strong collective voice as individuals we are but a tiny weak squeak!!!!

Keep in touch with AFGE Local 1869

<http://www.AFGElocal1869.org>

- The union office is now on the Charleston AFB LAN. Our E-mail address is :
- CHARLESTON.AFGE@CHARLESTON.AF.MIL
- If we are out of the office, send an email with your concerns or problem. We will have a written record of your inquiry and will get right back with you.

AFGE Local 1869

Building 636, 205 W. Stewart Avenue
Charleston AFB, SC 29404-4465
(843) 963-5765 (843) 552-8249
Editor's E-mail: afge1869@netzero.com

Newsletter Editor: Del Davids
Staff: Dan Grausso, Jennifer Page and Joe Rackley

President's E-mail:
afge1869@netzero.com

Phone: (843) 747-4175
Fax: (843) 747-4711

Representative Joe Wilson

Web Site: joewilson.house.gov
E-mail: [Contact Via 'Web Form.'](#)

Washington Office:
212 CHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4002
Phone: (202) 225-2452
Fax: (202) 225-2455

Main District Office:
903 Port Republic St.
Beaufort, SC 29901
Phone: (843) 521-2530
Fax: (843) 521-2535

Talk with your Representatives!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Senator Jim Demint

Web site: www.demint.senate.gov
Email: Via web site

Washington office:
SR-340
Washington, DC 20510-4002
Phone: (202) 224-6121
Fax: (202) 228-5143

Charleston

Phone: (843) 727-4525
Fax: (843) 722-4923
Address:
112 Customs House, 200 East Bay St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Senator Lindsey Graham

Web site: www.lgrahaam.senate.gov
Email: Via web site

Washington office:
SR290
Washington, DC 20510-4001

Mt. Pleasant

Phone: (843) 849-3887
Fax: (843) 849-3887
Address:
530 Johnnie Dodds Blvd., Ste. 202
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Representative Henry Brown

Web Site: www.house.gov/henrybrown
E-mail: [Contact Via 'Web Form.'](#)

Washington Office:
1124 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4001
Phone: (202) 225-3176
Fax: (202) 225-3407

Main District Office:
5900 Core Ave., Ste. 401
North Charleston, SC 29406

Representative J. Gresham Barrett

Web Site: www.house.gov/barrett
E-mail: [Contact Via 'Web Form.'](#)

Washington Office:
1523 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4003
Phone: (202) 225-5301
Fax: (202) 225-3216

Main District Office:
315 South McDuffie St.
Anderson, SC 29622
Phone: (864) 224-7401
Fax: (864) 225-7049

Representative Bob Inglis

Web Site: www.house.gov/inglis
E-mail: [Contact Via 'Web Form.'](#)

Washington Office:
330 CHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4004
Phone: (202) 225-6030
Fax: (202) 226-1177

Main District Office:
105 North Spring St., Ste. 111
Greenville, SC 29601
Phone: (864) 232-1141
Fax: (864) 233-2160

Representative John M. Spratt

Web Site: www.house.gov/spratt
E-mail: [Contact Via 'Web Form.'](#)

Washington Office:
1401 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4005
Phone: (202) 225-5501
Fax: (202) 225-0464

Main District Office:
201 East Main St., Ste. 305
Rock Hill, SC 29730
Phone: (803) 327-1114
Fax: (803) 327-4330

Representative James Clyburn

Web Site: www.house.gov/clyburn
E-mail: jclyburn@mail.house.gov

Phone: (803) 799-1100
Fax: (803) 799-9060

Washington Office:

2135 RHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-4006
Phone: (202) 225-3315
Fax: (202) 225-2313

Main District Office:

1703 Gervais St.
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable Henry E. Brown Jr.
House of Representatives
1124 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4001

Re: Please Co-Sponsor H.R.800, The Employee Free Choice Act

Representative Brown:

I am writing to urge you to support the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800)

Working people are struggling to make ends meet these days, and our middle class is disappearing. The best opportunity for working people to get ahead economically is to unite and bargain with employers for better wages and benefits.

But the current system for forming unions and bargaining is broken. Corporations routinely block worker's freedom to decide for themselves whether to form unions to bargain by intimidating, harassing, coercing and even firing workers.

The Employee Free Choice Act would restore worker's freedom to make their own choice about whether to have a union and bargain for a better life—without interference from management. The legislation, which enjoys bipartisan support in the 110th Congress, would:

- **Strengthen penalties for companies that coerce or intimidate employees**
- **Establish mediation and binding arbitration when the employer and workers can not agree on a first contract**
- **Enable workers to form unions when the majority signs union authorization cards**

Today, CEO's get contracts that protect their pay and benefits—but they fight tooth and nail to keep workers from having the same opportunity. As a result, good jobs are vanishing and health care coverage and retirement security are slipping out of reach. Only 38 percent of the public say their families are getting ahead financially, and less than a quarter believes the next generation will be better off.

I urge you to support the Employee Free Choice Act to give working families an opportunity for a better life, level the playing field for workers and employers and help rebuild America's working class. I look forward to hearing about your views and seeing your action on this matter that is so important to South Carolina families.

Sincerely,

AFGE Local 1869
PO Box 4465
Charleston AFB, SC 29404-4465

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