

DOD EMPLOYEES

AFGE Launches Campaign to Repeal NSPS

AFGE is mobilizing hundreds of thousands of members across the country to urge their lawmakers to repeal the controversial National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

The campaign, which kicked off in March, asks AFGE locals to circulate and send their lawmakers the NSPS Repeal Resolution, which calls for support for legislation repealing NSPS. An authorization bill with a provision to repeal NSPS is expected to be introduced in the House in April.

“Congress gave this authority to DoD in good faith, but DoD has misled Congress about its true intentions,” said AFGE President John Gage. “It is time now for this Congress to hold them accountable for their untrustworthy behavior and act immediately to repeal the NSPS authority.”

DoD came up with NSPS in 2005 after Congress two years earlier authorized the agency to revamp its personnel system for 650,000 civilian workers. AFGE has maintained that NSPS is designed to strip employees of their collective bargaining rights and eliminate the right to fair treatment in adverse action cases. It also opens the door to abuse and favoritism and subjects employees to a non-transparent pay system where pay is more budget driven than performance driven.

AFGE along with 12 other Defense unions filed a lawsuit in November 2005 challenging DoD's labor-management rules and the appeals process. Three months later AFGE won a ruling against NSPS as the federal judge declared illegal major portions of NSPS. Even though the case is pending at the appeals court, DoD went ahead to implement the pay portion of the system that was not blocked by the court for non-bargaining unit employees.

AFGE Calls for Cancellation of Botched A-76 at Keesler AFB

The Pentagon may face another Walter Reed debacle if it does not cancel the eight-year job competition at Mississippi's Keesler Air Force Base that no longer reflects the base's current needs, warns AFGE.

In a March 29 letter sent to the Air Education and Training Command, AFGE is protesting the agency's tentative decision to outsource the base operation work to DynCorp. AFGE argues that the competition exceeded the time limit set by law and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76, which governs job competitions. The damage done to Keesler by Hurricane Katrina has also changed the work to be performed substantially. In addition, the Air Force inappropriately interfered with the in-house bid, resulting in higher costs for the team.

The competition started in 1999 and originally involved about 700 civilian and military personnel. But it was suspended because of a 2001 General Accounting Office ruling on a separate case, which put several other ongoing competitions on hold. The Air Force later resumed the competition and reached its tentative decision to outsource the work on August 18, 2005. But Katrina hit days later, delaying the competition even further. The competition was again resumed early this year.

The competition should have been cancelled because it exceeded the time limit set by law and the circular, which was revised in 2003. OMB allowed DoD to use the old circular to carry on the Keesler competition, but it required that the competition be cancelled if it was not completed before September 2004. The Air Force also violated the 2004 law which prohibits DoD from using funds on an A-76 study that exceeds 48 months. A 2005 law sets an earlier time period of 30 months. AFGE is calling on the Air Force to cancel the competition or at least recompile the work under the new OMB rules.

