

TO ALL DOD EMPLOYEES

My sincere thanks go out to each and every one of you for all that you accomplished during the last 30 days. You are responsible for the nearly 40,000 comments on NSPS! But your greatest achievement was the education you provided to local/national media, community members and your elected members of Congress. Your voices are being heard and your passion is being felt across this entire country. Now, even more than ever, we must take advantage of our momentum to raise our level of activism. It is extremely important that our message remains visible as we enter into the next phase of the implementation of NSPS.

Members of Congress, from both sides of the aisle, have begun asking DoD important questions concerning the content of NSPS, the process used to develop it and what effect the massive changes proposed will have on National Security. Also, they are questioning the ability of DoD to educate and train ALL employees based on DoD's lack of dedicated funding. These concerns are being echoed through the news media, especially in communities where you and your members have reached out to educate people through letters to the editors, radio/newspaper ads and making yourselves available for intelligent and informative interviews. You must take pride in what you have accomplished, yet, not become complacent, because if you do, your actions will be wasted. We must all commit to finishing the WAR if we are to ensure that the rights of DoD civilian employees are protected in the future.

The next phase of the implementation process of NSPS is being called the "meet and confer" phase. During this phase, DoD officials and the Unions representing DoD civilians will be meeting for the purpose of trying to reach agreement on specific content of NSPS. If you have read the UDWC and/or the AFGE comments then you realize that there are major concerns and differences that need to be resolved. If there are going to be any substantial changes made to NSPS it will be as a result of the "MEET AND CONFER" phase. Members of Congress, the news media and National Unions have been told by Sec. of Navy, Gordon England that DoD would make a sincere effort, during "meet and confer" to make changes to the proposed NSPS regulations based on in-depth, intelligent and meaningful discussions and exchange of proposals with ALL Unions representing DoD employees. Each and every one of you will become bargaining chips for the Union Coalition (UDWC).

The only hope that we have in changing NSPS is to keep applying pressure to members of Congress and to keep the public educated. As DoD employees and Union activists you MUST stay informed and you must stay committed. I believe that any success gained by the Coalition will be a direct result of actions that you are taking at the local level. You must prepare yourselves and your locals to be able to immediately react to events occur at the bargaining table in Wash. DC and you must be able to share this information with every one at your installations.

Last week, all of you should have received an e-mail asking that you update your local contact information. If you have not done so, please send in contact information to gibsom@afge.org. Our current data base is awful, it needs to be updated ASAP. The DEFCON plan is to establish a communication base so that you are receiving “real time” information. You must know what the proposals are and you must provide input immediately. We will be communicating on a continuous basis, which means during caucus sessions and a daily recap. You must have someone committed to staying on top of this communication and being able to provide input. We will take your comments and concerns and use them as a basis for our proposals. When we are experience problems, which we ALL expect will happen, and then we will relay them to you. You must be our voice and our second hand in explaining to local media outlets and to members of Congress any/all problems that are happening between DoD officials and the Coalition team. This seems so simple that it’s almost silly; however, you have showed the effects of what you are capable of doing during the past 30 days. **YOU MADE PEOPLE LISTEN!** I can only hope that you fully understand your power and what you able to do.

We will be experimenting with some test runs of our data base later this week. We will be looking to see if we have correct contact info and also to see who is responding and how long it takes to complete a communiqué. I expect that DoD will inform us this week of what the ground rules will be for the “meet and confer” phase. We will provide you that information as soon as we get it. There will be additional, more specific guidance once we receive the ground rules. Please understand that things will be happening very quickly. All of us must be prepared to respond immediately and to be able to be flexible in our plans.

Thank you for your efforts, but don’t take time to pat yourselves on the back, not yet. There is much left for all of us to do!

In solidarity forever;
Don Hale
AFGE DEFCON President