



## TRAC ACT LANDS IN U.S. SENATE

AFGE's assault against wasteful and unaccountable contracting out and privatization in the federal government landed in the United States Senate when Senator **Chuck Robb** (D-Va.) introduced the Truthfulness, Responsibility and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act on July 10.

Senators **Daniel Akaka** (D-Hawaii), **Richard Durbin** (D-Ill.), **Russ Feingold** (D-Wis.), **Ted Kennedy** (D-Mass.), **Barbara Mikulski** (D-Md.), **Paul Sarbanes** (D-Md.), **Chuck Schumer** (D-N.Y.) and **Paul Wellstone** (D-Minn.) co-sponsored S.2841. (see **S.2841** on page 7)

## AFGE Wins Landmark Lawsuit

AFGE unanimously won a precedent-setting lawsuit on June 30, that halts the government's attempt to shift inspection of meat and poultry to the industry itself.

The suit, filed April 8, 1998, was decided in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. AFGE represents 5,300 federal food inspectors through its National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals.

This is a great victory for consumers because the USDA is no longer allowed to abdicate its responsibility for food safety.

The verdict stated that the law requires inspections be done by federal inspectors and not by employees of the meat and poultry industry.

## Meat Inspectors Killed

### IG Report Criticized HACCP

The owner of a sausage plant in San Leandro, Calif., shot and killed three government meat inspectors (two federal and one state) at his plant on June 21.

"The deaths of the three meat inspectors were senseless. They were killed trying to protect consumers," said AFGE President **Bobby Harnage**. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families involved in this most unfortunate and brutal act." (see **Meat Inspectors** on page 4)

## Sick Leave Expanded

Expanded leave benefits for federal employees allow up to 12 weeks of earned sick leave to provide care to a family member with a serious health condition, according to Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM said the new benefit is valuable for its ability to help employees both at work and home. Under previous regulations, federal employees could use from five days to 13 days of accrued sick leave to provide care for family members or for bereavement purposes. However, the results of a 1997 survey conducted by OPM noted concerns that the 13-day limitation was inadequate for employees dealing with the long-term illness of family members.

This benefit eliminates a significant barrier to caring for a family member with a serious health condition. The new policy became effective June 20, 2000. Regulations implementing the sick-leave policy appeared in the *Federal Register* on June 21.

**AFGE Convention**  
August 21-25, 2000  
Orlando, Florida

Celebrating Our Proud History! Building Our Future Success!

Whether you're attending AFGE's first Convention of the 21<sup>st</sup> century or not, be sure to follow the events on AFGE's Web site. Go to the Convention section in the *Members-Only* portion of [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) starting the first week in August.

## Focus: EMT Idea

Providing affordable and reliable transportation for veterans with an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on board is an ongoing problem at Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) across the country. This was also the case at the VAMC in Roseburg, Oregon, where contractors were hired to transport veterans. Needless to say, the contractors charged a bundle. In 1994, **Jon Dick** of **Local 1042** had an idea to save taxpayer dollars by hiring a full time EMT to travel with medical transport drivers. Today, his idea is saving thousands of taxpayer dollars. (see **Focus: EMT Idea** on page 8)

## Transit Subsidies

President **Bill Clinton** issued Executive Order 13150 on April 21, requiring federal agencies in the Washington area to offer their employees transit subsidies of up to \$65 per month no later than Oct. 1, 2000. Federal employees involved in the nationwide pilot program (involving three agencies) can receive up to \$65 per month for public transportation costs. Employees outside the D.C. area not involved in the pilot program can pull transit subsidies of up to \$65 from their pretax wages. The pilot program will be evaluated to determine whether to extend the transit benefit to federal employees nationwide.

## 1,100 Join in Louisville

**Local 1438** [a former National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Local] represents 1,700 workers in the U. S. Census Bureau. With the 2000 Census underway, the Local anticipated new members would join AFGE. But they never expected they would join the union by the hundreds. When the Louisville Metro was over, AFGE was 1,100 members stronger. (see **Former NFFE Local Grows with AFGE** on page 3)

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# The AFGE Convention: Gateway To The Future



## A Message From President Bobby L. Harnage

AFGE has a great record of achievement for our members, whether they work for the federal or the D.C. government, either directly or indirectly as an employee of a contractor.

We have won significant pay increases for GS workers. We are aggressively pushing for better pay for Wage Grade and Title 38 workers through legislation. We secured an improved pay system for fire fighters. We continue to battle for fair wages for NAF, AAFES and DC workers. We recently concluded successful wage negotiations for employees of Raytheon.

We recently negotiated major child care subsidies in several agencies. We won improved EEO procedures and the right to compensatory damages in EEO cases. AFGE has won hundreds of millions in back pay in recent years for overtime abuses, health and safety violations, and other matters.

In our battles over privatization, we defeated the Freedom From Government Competition Act. We have won the first accountability measures requiring DoD to report back to Congress. We have filed a number of lawsuits over privatization in place, Arsenal Act violations, against direct conversion for preference groups, against providing contractors with unfair inside information, and others. We just won a major case preventing the government from shifting its responsibilities for the inspection of chickens to the industry itself.

Over 10,000 employees are still working in the VA due to the successful budget fight AFGE waged in coordination with the Disabled Veterans of America.

Our SWAMP (Stop Wasting America's Money on Privatization) campaign and TRAC Act have gathered tremendous Congressional support because of our growing legislative and political grassroots movement around the country. Since its March introduction, over 180 Congressional Representatives have signed on

to support the legislation which calls for a moratorium on contracting out. A Senate version was introduced on July 10, and similar legislation is almost ready to be introduced in the D.C. government as well.

We are building a stronger union every day and in every way in order to effectively represent our members' interests.

We have a valuable Web site with lots of information. AFGE now offers our own Internet portal called [afge.workingfamilies.com](http://afge.workingfamilies.com). Very soon, every member will be able to register for the AFGE Action News on the AFGE Web site to receive special e-mail news action alerts about late-breaking news. We are close to providing an opportunity for online training through AFGE on everything from computer training to preparing for SAT exams for all members and their families.

Our voice is getting stronger. Our membership has grown by over 16,000 since the beginning of 1997. This year the rate of growth is faster than at any time since the 1960's. We started the decade at 169,000 active members and we are on target to reach 200,000 this year. Our combined retired and active membership stands at over 213,000.

AFGE is a great union doing great things for its members. The Convention in August is our union's opportunity to continue to build our union to assure our success in the future. But we must seize this special opportunity and make the necessary decisions to move our union forward, so that we can be equipped to continue to successfully represent the interests of our members in the years ahead.

## Union Insights... Union Insights... Union Insights

### What Members-Only benefits do you and members in your Local utilize the most?



**Neil Armstrong**  
President, Local 1978  
Member for 12 Years  
DoI, Hoover Dam  
Boulder City, Nev.

A majority of the members use the AFGE MasterCard and Dental Benefits Programs.



**Dana Franks**  
Local 3354  
Member since Nov. 1999  
USDA, Rural Dept.  
Woodward, Okla.

I do access AFGE's Web site and will certainly go to the *Membership Pays* and *Members-Only* sections to learn more.



**Emma Sneed**  
Sec.-Treas., Local 2437  
Member for 16 years  
Dallas VA Medical Center  
Dallas

I have the AFGE MasterCard and I use the Loan Program—I am very happy with both of them.

The AFGE MasterCard, Credit Builder, Legal Services, Mortgage and Real Estate, Loan, Scholarship, Discount Prescription, Auto Buying, Home Owners Insurance, Accident Insurance and Dental Benefits are some of the benefits offered to AFGE members. Members also receive car rental, moving and flower discounts. To learn about all the Members-Only benefits, log onto [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) and go to the *Members-Only* section or call the AFGE Benefits Hotline at (888) 844-2343. D.C. residents call (202) 639-6941.

## King to Retire After 31 Years

**Jerriann King**, whose first day of work at AFGE was on January 6, 1969, will be retiring from the Communications Department in the National Office on Sept. 1. Jerriann worked in AFGE's Legislation Dept., the General Counsel's Office and the Field Service/Labor Management Dept. before finding her niche in the Public Relations Office in 1980. A resident of Greenbelt, Md., Jerriann's retirement plans include remodeling her home, traveling, reading and taking more time for friends and family. We will miss you!



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**Rita R. Mason, National Secretary-Treasurer**  
**Kitty Peddicord, Dir., Women's/Fair Practices Depts.**

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## Union Members Online

Union members are going online in a big way, with 74 percent of all members who own a computer subscribing to an online service—an increase of 18 percent from a year ago, according to an AFL-CIO survey. The recently launched [workingfamilies.com](http://workingfamilies.com) Web portal will enable even more union members to get online through discounted Internet service (see **News You Can Use** on page 5).

Women and union members with a high school education or less showed the largest increase in online subscriptions. Eighty-four percent of the women in the survey and 81 percent of workers with a high school education who have a computer said they subscribe to a service. Union members with some college (83 percent of those surveyed) and those younger than 40 (84 percent) are most likely to subscribe to an online service.

While the number of online subscriptions increased, the market share among union members subscribing to the largest Internet service, America Online, dropped from 51 percent to 37 percent, as smaller providers have become more popular.

## AFGE Embraces Lifelong Learning

Congratulations to AFGE staff (l-r) **Joy Brillante**, **Joel Zamora** and **Toni Douglas** for completing the Labor Studies Degree program at the National Labor College. The graduates received their Bachelor of Arts degrees on June 24, 2000.



For more information on the National Labor College and the *John N. Sturdivant Scholarship Program*, contact the AFGE Benefits Hotline at (888) 844-2343. D.C. residents call (202) 639-6941.

## Two-Year Struggle Brings Union Victory

Federal employees at the National Mediation Board (NMB) in Washington, D.C., are finally represented by AFGE. AFGE stood by and supported this unit at every turn for two years with the strong belief that no agency should be able to smother a group of federal workers who want union representation.

NMB employees came to AFGE more than two years ago looking for a defense against a management that interprets “reinvention of government” as a mandate for downsizing and contracting out. The NMB responded to the employees’ desires to join AFGE with a legal assault. Management plays included a motion to

dismiss the union petition for an election, two separate appeals to the full Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) and a motion to reconsider when an election was ordered. The NMB succeeded in excluding mediators from the AFGE-represented bargaining unit, but the clerical and administrative staff chose AFGE in May.

Workers in the NMB bargaining unit now call **Local 2211** home. The Local also represents federal employees at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the International Trade Commission (ITC).

## Former NFFE Local Grows with AFGE

(continued from page 1)

When **Donna Nicholson** was elected President of Local 1438 last September, the first order of business was a membership drive. Nicholson contacted the **6<sup>th</sup> District** National Vice President (NVP) **Arnold Scott** and was informed of plans to hold a Metro in Louisville. “Scott asked us to participate and we said yes,” recalled Nicholson.

Working closely with the Local’s 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President **Scott Swansgar**, Local 1438 began promoting the AFGE member-only benefits, along with talking up AFGE’s legislative efforts to stop contracting out. The Local also offered a \$40 cash rebate (\$20 from the National Office and \$20 from the District Office) as an incentive to join AFGE.

“People literally lined-up outside the door to join,” Nicholson exclaimed. “They were like sponges—thirsty for information about AFGE.” Nicholson said many of the new hires—younger workers in their thirties—had a renewed interest in unions.

Local 1438 listed three key factors to their overwhelming success—extensive planning, growth potential and dedicated activists. Many stewards and officers used their own leave to help

with planning and implementation of the Lunch & Learns.

Working on the recruitment effort were Local 1438 Recording Sec. **Caren Bottoms** and Stewards **Julie Atkinson**, **Maulana Hudson**, **John McCoy**, **Nancy McCrary**, **Sherrie**



[sitting] Arvin Byrd and Bev Swansgar signing up members.

**Middleton**, **Anessa Ross**, **Bev Swansgar**, **Donna Wood** and **Shirley Yarborough**. Women’s/Fair Practices Departments Director **Kitty Peddicord**, NVP Scott, the **6<sup>th</sup> District’s** Women’s Coordinator **Michaelene Vandine** and National Representatives **Arvin Bryd**, **Dale Cox** and **Diane Hollins** also participated. **Locals 2302** and **3984** were involved as well in the Louisville Metro.

## Reno VA Workers Join Union

Whether it’s organizing the unorganized, challenging wing and ward closures or preserving benefits for veterans, AFGE is delivering for VA workers. Over 250 doctors, nurses and other health care workers at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Reno, Nev., voted for AFGE representation in May. **Local 2152** President **Carol Walton** said members of the Local are thrilled that so many of their co-workers joined AFGE.

## Meat Inspectors (continued from page 1)

AFGE, representing 5,300 federal food inspectors, is critical of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) meat inspection program, which leaves more responsibility for safe food with meat and poultry plant owners.

“There is a great deal of friction and turmoil on the front lines for federal meat inspectors,” said Harnage. “Changes in the meat inspection system, such as HACCP, are making it harder for inspectors to perform their jobs. This unfortunate incident adds to an already delicate situation.”

**Arthur Hughes**, Vice Chairman of the National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals, said the killings show once again the new inspection system “is not working.” Meat and poultry plants often don’t follow HACCP, which requires them to identify hazard points on slaughter lines and impose controls at those points to prevent food contamination.

The Inspector General (IG) of the Agriculture Department—which monitors food safety—criticized HACCP the day before the deaths. The IG’s report said it lets the agency “reduce oversight beyond what was prudent and necessary for the protection of the consumer.”

AFGE’s National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals shared their experiences of meat and poultry plant hazards with members of Congress last year. Additionally, AFGE filed a lawsuit last year challenging the HACCP process. Visit [www.the-inspector.com/main.htm](http://www.the-inspector.com/main.htm) for more information on federal food inspectors.



## OPM & Asbestos—It’s Not About Safety

In an attempt to save money, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has proposed to change the environmental differential pay category for exposure to asbestos for Federal Wage System (FWS) employees. Such a change would decrease the pay of federal workers exposed to asbestos fibers exceeding the permissible exposure limits. AFGE came out against the change at the June 8, 2000, Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee meeting.

## Arbitrator Orders GSA Back To The Table

A May 22 decision by Arbitrator **Jerome Ross** ordered the General Services Administration (GSA) to keep all distribution centers and forward supply points open until formal negotiations are completed with AFGE.

The decision found that GSA did not fulfill its negotiating obligations under the National Agreement in issuing a memorandum to employees announcing the closure of two distribution centers and all four forward supply points by April 2001. Ross ordered the agency to return to the bargaining table to begin formal negotiations with AFGE. A copy of the decision can be found on AFGE’s Web site at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

## Privatization Is About Profit

On April 16, AFGE mobilized for global justice with other unions of the AFL-CIO and many of the world’s leading environmental and religious organizations. This protest condemned the harmful policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Thousands of activists from around the world gathered in Washington, D.C., to object to programs that impoverish workers, degrade the environment and promote privatization.

National President **Bobby Harnage** spoke at the rally, stressing that the same forces that hurt working families in Asia, Africa and South America harm working people in America.

“Structural adjustment abroad is known as privatization, downsizing and contracting out here in America. Today, AFGE fights against giving the work of the government and the public sector to multinational corporations,” said Harnage.

The IMF, World Bank and WTO claim to “assist” governments with poverty, debt and credit problems. In reality they will only provide help to governments that agree to allow

corporations free access to resources and labor. These debt relief policies require poor countries to dedicate a large part of their national budgets to paying back foreign creditors. Through the use of grants and loans, these multinational organizations force government reform programs that increase poverty by requiring privatization of government services and cutbacks in government spending. As a result, government employees lose their jobs, health programs are slashed and education suffers.

## Local 1945 and Army Reach Settlement



Anniston Army Depot is known as the Tank Rebuild Capitol of the World. At some point in time, an AFGE member has touched every M1 tank.

**A** FGE members who received environmental differential pay (EDP) at the Anniston Army Depot will soon be receiving \$1.725 million in back pay and interest for cadmium exposure. **Local 1945**, representing the 310 welders, machinists, mechanics, fork lifters and crane operators involved in the settlement, engaged in extensive negotiations with management on behalf of those workers who were exposed to cadmium between January 1, 1991 and April 28, 2000.

Inhaling lower levels of cadmium over a long period of time can cause kidney disease and lung damage. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, breathing air with very high levels of cadmium severely damages the lungs and can cause death. Visit [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts5.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts5.html) for more information on cadmium.

This agreement, which was reached on April 28, 2000, is also intended to establish a framework for discussing possible present and/or future entitlement to EDP for cadmium exposure for this group of employees.

## Poll: Jobs Going Overseas

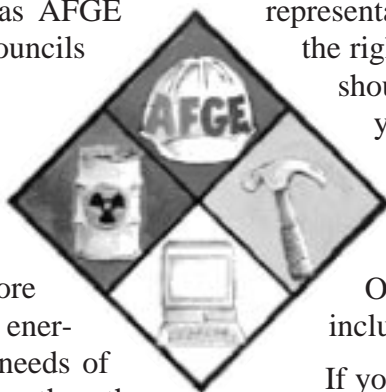
Nearly 50 percent of people responding to a recent poll by Reuters/Zogby believe that an exodus of jobs from their community to overseas labor markets is an issue for the next president’s agenda.

While only 14.1 percent felt that a loss of employment opportunities in their locale was the most important issue in the presidential race, another 35 percent said it was very important, according to the poll of 842 likely voters. Almost a quarter of those earning \$25,000-\$34,999 identified this issue as their most important concern in the coming election.

# Health & Safety Watch

The inaugural article of the Health & Safety Watch introduces AFGE Local Health and Safety representatives, as well as AFGE members and leaders to the Federal Safety and Health Councils (FSHCs).

The councils are cooperative interagency organizations where safety and health professionals share ideas, training and other resources in an effort to improve health and safety programs. Management representatives normally run the councils with agency support. However, AFGE needs more health and safety activists from the Locals to take the lead in energizing inactive councils. That way, the health and safety needs of AFGE members will be served. In the next few months, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will ask agencies to support the work of the councils. Make sure there is strong union participation in the councils.



As the Health and Safety representative for your Local or as the union representative on your agency's Health and Safety Committee, you have the right to participate in the council's activities. AFGE participation should be on duty time and with any related expenses covered by your agency. In future issues, sample language will be published to include in bargaining agreements.

To see if there's a council in your area, check with your local OSHA office. The phone numbers are available on the OSHA Web site at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). Soon the OSHA Web site will include a list of councils and points of contact.

If you have been involved with a council, AFGE would like to hear about your experiences. Please e-mail AFGE's Health & Safety Specialist at [rodrim@afge.org](mailto:rodrim@afge.org). Be sure to check out the Health & Safety section of AFGE's Web site ([www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)) for more information.

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Labor Day: September 4, 2000

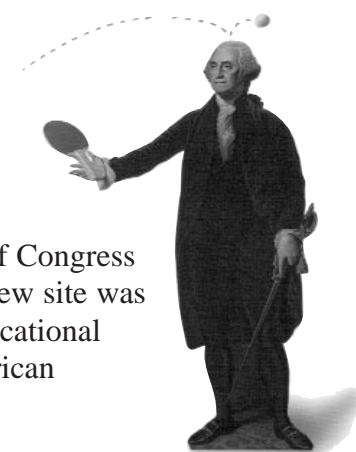
Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It is a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity and well being of our country.

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations and by 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

### There's a Better Way To Have Fun With History

[www.americaslibrary.gov](http://www.americaslibrary.gov)

America's Library is an easy-to-use and entertaining Web site designed by the Library of Congress especially for children and their families. The new site was created to provide kids with an entertaining educational experience that draws on the unparalleled American historical collections of the Library.



### SFLRP to Meet in September

The Society of Federal Labor Relations Professionals (SFLRP) will hold its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Federal Sector Labor-Management Relations at the Washington Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 21-22, 2000. SFLRP is a national, non-profit, membership organization striving to improve the federal labor-management relations program.

AFGE is a co-sponsor of this year's symposium. For more information call (703) 685-4130, e-mail [sflrp@aol.com](mailto:sflrp@aol.com) or visit the SFLRP Web site at <http://members.aol.com/sflrp>.

## Education Loans for AFGE Members

Introducing Union Plus<sup>SM</sup> Education Loans.

Call for information:  
**1-888-844-AFGE**  
Se habla español

www.afge.org

## It's Time To Get Connected!

[afge.workingfamilies.com](http://afge.workingfamilies.com) is your home on the Web — the only place where you and your family can find everything you need to manage your life and stay connected to your union.

Receive premium Internet access offered exclusively to AFGE families for a special, discounted price of \$14.<sup>95</sup> a month. *That's an annual savings of up to \$84 compared to other providers!*



- ✓ Fast, unlimited service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- ✓ Guaranteed privacy — no ads or junk e-mail
- ✓ Service won't knock you offline
- ✓ Reliable, local access numbers throughout the U.S.
- ✓ Up to 5 e-mail addresses
- ✓ Free customer service and technical support

Sign up at  
[www.afge.workingfamilies.com](http://www.afge.workingfamilies.com)  
or call (800) 806-2150  
for more information.

# On The Hill

## OPM Publishes Final Child Care Regulations Agencies Obtain Authority to Subsidize Tuition Expenses

After much delay, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has published final regulations permitting federal agencies to provide tuition assistance to low income federal employees using child care services. A copy of the final OPM Regulations on Child Care and the OPM Guidance are now available. For further information on this new program, visit the AFGE Web site at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) or the OPM Web site at [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).

## Council 73 and Local 32 Negotiate Child Care

AFGE's National Council of Field Labor Locals, **Council 73**, has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Labor (DoL) covering its Child Care Subsidy Program. The Program—being touted as one of the best—provides as much as \$375 per month toward child care costs. A copy of the AFGE and DoL Agreement can be found in the Members-Only portion of the AFGE Web site in the Collective Bargaining section.

OPM and **Local 32** have signed an agreement for low-income child care tuition assistance. The plan establishes a sliding scale formula that delivers as much as 30 percent of child care costs to families earning less than \$22,000 annually and reduced benefits for higher income workers. In the expensive child care centers in D.C.—which charge as much as \$10,400 per child per year—this union program is equivalent to a 14 percent pay raise to workers at this level.

AFGE Councils and Locals that have successfully obtained child care tuition assistance should forward a copy of the agreement via e-mail to [eeo@afge.org](mailto:eeo@afge.org).

## VA Workers Take to Capitol Hill

More than 80 AFGE activists in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) came together in Washington, D.C., on June 14 and 15 to lobby Congress. The VA workers met with their lawmakers and advocated for increases in staff and funding to support VA-provided medical care and benefit programs. Participants also spoke out in strong support of holding the VA accountable for funds wasted on contractors.

For many of the AFGE members in attendance, this was the first time they met with their elected officials—but you would have never known it. Because of their union experiences, genuine commitment to veterans and knowledge of the issues, AFGE members were highly effective.

The 2000 National Veterans Affairs Council (NVAC) Legislative Conference builds on the success of the September 1999 NVAC Lobby Day. In '99, AFGE worked hand-in-hand with veterans groups to fight for a \$1.8 billion funding increase for veterans' health care, saving some 10,000 VA jobs.

The VA activists were welcomed by AFGE's National Officers. Speakers included: **Mark Catlett**, VA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget; **Kim Lipsky**, staff on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; **Steve Gorfain**, representing the Chief Network Office of the Veterans Health Administration; **George Duggins**, National President of the Vietnam Veterans of America; and AFGE Legislative Representatives **Linda Bennett** and **John Threlkeld**.

## On The Record With...

**Senator  
Chuck Robb  
(D-Va.)**



**Committees:** Armed Services (ranking member of the Readiness Subcommittee); Finance; Joint Economic; and Select Intelligence

## TRAC Act Ensures Competitions Occur

The following speech was given by Senator Robb before the introduction of the TRAC Act in the U.S. Senate:

*Mr. President, I'm pleased to be joined by several of my colleagues to introduce the Truthfulness, Responsibility and Accountability in Contracting Act, or the TRAC Act.*

*The TRAC Act, simply stated, seeks the best value for the federal dollar. Its main objectives are instituting public-private competition and tracking costs. My colleagues and I agree that improvements to service contracting should be made, and this bill is one way to achieve that.*

*Our bill directs federal agency certification before entering into new contracts. These standards include establishing agency-wide reporting systems to report contracting efforts; requiring public-private competition; and reviewing contractor work and recompeting that work if appropriate.*

*Why the new standards? So we can better ascertain what the federal government is spending for government services. **David Walker**, Comptroller General for the General Accounting Office, stated recently in a June 1, Washington Post piece by **David Broder** that "...it is not clear that the remaining federal employees are capable of monitoring the cost and quality of the outsourced activities." The ability to monitor costs is essential if the Congress is to exercise proper oversight of federal funds spent to carry out services by either contractors or federal employees.*

*We also want to ensure an even playing field between contractors and federal employees when competing for work. The public-private competitions required by the TRAC Act will determine how best the federal government can save money on its many critical services. Our bill doesn't guarantee any pre-determined outcome in a public-private competition, but rather ensures that these competitions occur.*

*Our bill will allow the federal agencies to see who completes work most effectively, regardless of who delivers the service.*

*With that, Mr. President, I send the bill to the desk and ask that it be appropriately referred and I yield the floor.*



Gone are the days of raffling for child care?

## S.2841 (continued from page 1)

The Senate version of the TRAC Act aims to accomplish six objectives:

1. **Track Costs**—The Act would require agencies to track costs and savings from contracting out.
2. **Require Public-Private Competition**—The Act would prevent agencies from contracting out work without public-private competition.
3. **Abolish Arbitrary Personnel Ceilings**—The Act would allow agencies to hire additional federal employees if they could do the work more efficiently.
4. **Contracting In**—The Act would require agencies to subject work performed by contractors to the same level of public-private competition as work performed by federal employees.
5. **Wages and Benefits**—There would have to be a study to determine contracting out is used to undercut federal employees on their wages and benefits.
6. **Suspension**—The Senate bill would give agencies 180 days to clean up their act.

For a complete summary of S.2841 introduced by Senator **Chuck Robb** (D-Va.), visit the Legislation portion of the AFGE Web site ([www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)) or call the Legislative & Political Affairs Department at (202) 639-6413.

## Rep. Quinn (R-N.Y.) Signs onto TRAC Act



In a letter to AFGE's 2<sup>nd</sup> District, U.S. Rep. **Jack Quinn** (R-N.Y.)—who is Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits—informing AFGE that he was proud to report that he signed on to H.R. 3766 to help curb government outsourcing.

Quinn stated that he “believe(s) that we must protect federal workers from privatization. It is imperative that the House recognizes the importance of maintaining a federal work force composed of federal employees as opposed to non-federal personnel. There are limited circumstances that privatizing, outsourcing or contracting out is acceptable, and I believe that this bill limits and regulates those circumstances in an appropriate manner.”

## Local 2298 Works Hard at H.R. 3766



(l-r) Local 2298 President Chuck Covell, Rep. Spratt and Local 2298 Legislative Rep. Bill Walls.

Hats off to **Local 2298** for adding Rep. **John Spratt** (D-S.C.) to the House co-sponsors list of the TRAC Act (H.R. 3766). To date, H.R. 3766 has over 180 Democratic and Republican co-sponsors. Spratt has not only taken up AFGE's TRAC Act cause, he is also championing the cause of nearly 500 federal employees who are undergoing a Commercial Activities (CA) study at the Continental Naval Weapons Stations.

## On The Record With...

**Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.)**



**Committees:** *Judiciary; Foreign Relations; Budget Committee; and Aging*

U.S. Senator **Russ Feingold** announced on July 10 his support of the Truthfulness, Responsibility and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act, introduced by Senator **Chuck Robb** (D-Va.). Wisconsin AFGE members brought this issue to Feingold's attention. The Senator said:

“I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of this legislation, which will give federal workers a fair chance to compete for government contracts. This bill will, for the first time, require federal agencies to establish a centralized reporting system that will track the costs and savings of these contracts and will help to ensure that there is true savings in the contracting out process. We should not simply shift work to the private sector unless we are sure that a private contractor will be able to do the same job more efficiently and for less cost to the American taxpayers. I commend the members of AFGE for their commitment to this important issue.”

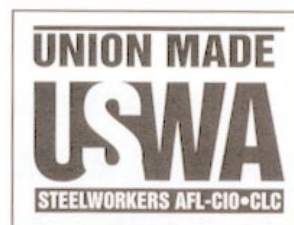
Earlier this year, after meeting with Wisconsin AFGE members, Feingold requested a General Accounting Office (GAO) study on the costs and benefits of “contracting out” of government work to private contractors. Feingold also requested that GAO examine whether government agencies are tracking the costs and savings associated with privatization.

## Fifteen Organizations Support TRAC Act

### Federal Managers Association Included

Fifteen organizations (listed below) joined AFGE in a June letter to members of the House of Representatives urging them to support and co-sponsor the Truthfulness, Responsibility and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act (H.R. 3766). For a copy of the letter, go to the *Legislation Section* of [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); American Federation of Teachers (AFT); Communications Workers of America (CWA); Federal Managers Association (FMA); International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT); International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE); International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots; Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA); National Association of Government Employees (NAGE); National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA); National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU); Professional Airways Systems Specialists (PASS); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); United Auto Workers (UAW); and United Steel Workers of America (USWA).



## Focus: EMT Idea

(continued from page 1)

February 16, 1999, was the first day of the VA Medical Transport with an EMT on board. By the end of fiscal year (FY) 1999, 331 patients were transported and \$112,507.97 was saved. The estimated savings with a second Medical Transport could be at least another \$100,000.00.

Between October 1999 and March 2000, 252 patients were transported, saving \$72,639.90. The savings are the dollars the VA would have paid to a contractor if the medical transport system was not in place.



[l-r] EMT's Scott Kieth and John Dick.

Dick, an EMT himself, has been promoting this program since 1994. Co-workers also pitch in: **Cathie Reber** tracks the savings and **Brent Holgate** works with Dick to transport patients to and from appointments and nursing homes. As for the veterans, they have nothing but praise for this system because of the personal care and attention they receive.

“Privatization doesn’t work—here’s a great example where in-house is cheaper and better,” said **Jim Ostrenga**, Treasurer of **Local 1042**.

This program was accomplished through a cooperative effort between the Bay Pines (Fla.) VA and Roseburg VA EMT’s.



## 312 NAF Employees Choose Local 1501

Non-appropriated fund (NAF) employees working at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., recently chose AFGE for representation. **Local 1501**

President **Jerry Farm** said AFGE will work hard to provide the 312 employees with a good contract, assuring them fair treatment and decent working conditions. Hats off to **Shirrella King** and **Sylvia Brooks** of Local 1501 for their election efforts.

## AFGE & INS Reach Agreement

AFGE **Council 117** and the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) signed a collective bargaining agreement on June 8. The agreement, which will last three years, came after four weeks of negotiations. The agreement includes greater health and safety language and an increase in uniform allowances. AFGE represents over 14,000 employees of the INS across the U.S. and around the world. Many AFGE members work in or near the nation’s major air, land and seaports of entry. For more information on the agreement visit [www.ninsc.com](http://www.ninsc.com).

## Prison Council Holds Regional Caucus

The AFGE Council of Prison Locals (CPL) held its Northeast Regional Caucus at the Woodlands Inn, Wilkes-Barre, Penn., from May 23-26. CPL Vice President **Dennis Biesik** welcomed over 70 delegates to the annual conference. **District 3** National Vice President **Jeffery Williams** addressed the group during the opening session with a briefing on National issues and upcoming Convention activity. Delegates attended training classes including Advanced Stewards Training which was conducted by District 3 National Representative **Joe Corcoran**.

## We're Here To Report What You're Doing

It may not be news to you, but it’s news to us! What role do you and your Local play in the federal government? Send in the story and a non-digital/non-Polaroid picture to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: Member Story & Photo Album, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Please clearly list the roles and responsibilities of your job and/or Local. Please identify all the subjects in the photos. All photos and stories become property of the AFGE Communications Department.



## AFGE NEWS

## A New Feature in The Government Standard

Beginning this issue, *The Government Standard* will feature a Health & Safety Watch to keep Local Health and Safety representatives and rank-and-file members up-to-date on health and safety issues in the federal government. (see **Health & Safety Watch** on page 5)

## DoL Local 2513 Names Winners

**Richard C. Schenu**, a Wage and Hour Specialist in the Buffalo-area Office, and **Thomas K. Rezsnyk**, an OSHA Safety Specialist in the Syracuse-area Office, were named Shop Stewards of the Year at the Annual DoL Employee Awards in June. Schenu and Rezsnyk were presented the Wilansky Steward Awards by **Bernie Wilansky**, founding President of Local 2513. The award was named in his honor earlier this year.

## Local 2096 Space Command Unit Wins A-76 Competition

Thanks to the hard work by many in AFGE, the U.S. Space Command represented by **Local 2096** in the **4<sup>th</sup> District** won the bidding for its work after undergoing a contracting out study under OMB Circular A-76. While having to fight the agency in order to participate, Local 2096 leaders—located at the Dahlgren, Va., Navy Base—provided numerous suggestions to the creation of the Performance Work Statement used in the A-76 process. The Local’s hard work proved once again that if government employees are given the chance, they can succeed in competition for their work. Results were announced the week of May 8.

## Update in Ohio

**Local 1138**’s media outreach placed a proposed contracting out initiative on hold at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. The Local also filed an appeal that alleged the contractor selection was flawed.

**Local 1138 Pres. Tom Robinson** being interviewed on Dayton’s Channel 2 morning news.

