



AFGE, Others Join Forces Against Plan To Set Up Private Social Security Accounts

A FGE has joined a coalition of organizations in opposition to Social Security private investment accounts that includes such groups as the AFL-CIO, AARP, the Alliance for Retired Americans, the Campaign for America's Future and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities.

In the coming months, AFGE members will be asked to join the fight to ensure that Social Security is maintained for all Americans.

"Contrary to assertions by the Bush administration and supporters of private investment accounts, the Social Security program is not in crisis," said AFGE **President John Gage**. "In fact, private investment accounts would create the sort of uncer-



tainty and risk that Social Security was created to protect against. Putting Social Security funds in the stock market would create a crisis when stock prices fall."

Proponents of private investment accounts cite conservative economic projections to justify their position. These projections, however, do not necessarily provide a realistic outlook for the program.

The trustees of the Social Security Administration (SSA), who are political appointees, and the bipartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) make projections on Social Security revenues and payments for a 75-year period. Both SSA and CBO project three possible scenarios: conservative estimates based on vir-

tually no economic growth in the United States over the next 75 years, a middle-of-the-road estimate based on reasonable economic expectations, and a third model anticipating robust economic growth.

Funding issues for Social Security occur only under the most conservative projections. These conservative models, however, are akin to assuming an economic "dark ages" of virtually no growth for the U.S. over the next 75 years, according to many observers. Moreover, under such an economic model, the stock market also would be expected to perform abysmally.

Social Security is a guaranteed program that supports every American. While most Americans do not qualify for Social Security payments until retirement, for many others, benefits become an essential source of income long before retirement age.

These include Americans who are disabled, those who have lost a spouse, and dependants. For these Americans, Social Security is a lifeline program. Because Social Security is a pay-as-you-go program, AFGE and others believe that private investment accounts *(continued on page 3)*

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ELECTION NOTICE

Note: Registration deadline is 30 days prior to caucus!!

Every three years, AFGE members elect the National Vice President (NVP), National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, and National Women's Advisory Coordinator to represent their District. Under AFGE's Constitution, election caucuses must be held in May of this year in all Districts. Nominations are conducted at the District Caucus through the Locals' elected delegates in accordance with Appendix A of the AFGE Constitution.

The Caucus Rules for 2005 and the dates and locations of all the District Caucuses are published in this issue on pages four through seven. Union members who wish to participate should take note of this information and direct questions to their respective NVP whose telephone number is listed at the bottom of page two. If there are any last minute changes, Local unions will be notified directly by their NVP.



A Message from National President John Gage

John Gage

"Ring out the old; ring in the new," the saying goes, and as I write this, a host of new challenges are taking shape before our eyes as 2005 gets under way. For the American Federation of Government Employees, President Bush's second inauguration on January 20th marked the redoubling of our efforts to preserve the rights of rank-and-file employees of the federal government and the District of Columbia, so that they may best serve the people of the United States.

Though the issues before us take different forms across a range of agencies, a common thread connects them: the steady erosion of or outright assault on an employee's right to question management decisions, even when those decisions run counter to the interests of the American people. In the Office of Special Counsel, employees who questioned management policies find themselves involuntarily transferred to

*TODAY,
we are
all
organizers.*

offices thousands of miles from their homes. At the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense, new personnel regulations weaken meaningful whistleblower protections. In the Department of Veterans Affairs, employees who speak publicly about problems in VA hospitals find themselves under investigation. Employees of the Transportation Security Administration, forbidden to bargain collectively, are denied the basic guarantees of the Bill of Rights.

With our fundamental rights eroded or denied—at great peril to the American public, I might add—the need for strong workplace representation of our members has become more urgent than ever. That's why AFGE is undertaking a new representation initiative that will see increased action from the offices of the General Counsel and Field Services on behalf of AFGE members. To that end, we hope to hire more attorneys to be based in the field, whose work will be solely dedicated to representation cases.

Our battle, however, is not just for our own rights, but for the wellbeing of the constituency we serve: the American taxpayer. That's why we'll be pulling the stops out to stave off the partial privatization of Social Security. As the people who get the checks out on time, we know what's at stake for future retirees. We know the people who

today depend on Social Security and disability payments; we're the ones who hear their stories.

Likewise, we know the criminals who populate our federal prison system and know how unsafe these prisons are becoming as they are starved ever more for operating expenses and human resources. Today, a RIF is in the offing at the Bureau of Prisons, where the ratio of prisoners to correctional officers is already dangerously high.

To maintain the strength we need to wage these battles, we will need to organize, organize, organize! Our power, indeed the power of the labor movement at large, lies in collective action. To that end, we need to take the action necessary to bring new members into the federation fold.

Today, we are all organizers.

In 2004, we kicked off a major organizing effort that must become part of our everyday lives. This is no organizing drive. Drives end when a numerical goal has been met. Instead, we will set recruitment challenges for ourselves, and when those numbers are met, we will set our sights even higher.

It is with great pride that I congratulate all those who have planned and participated in our many organizing activities to date. With our turbo-charged Lunch 'n' Learn program and the efforts of countless members, we came close to our goal of nearly 10,000 new members. But with half the federal workforce scheduled to retire in the next five years, organizing will continue to be vital to the future of our federation and the employees we represent. Membership Director Sharon Pinnock did a yeoman's job on increasing our membership.

So, let's raise our glasses to the beginning of a new year. Then, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.

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President Signs Measure Providing Average Raise Of 3.5 Percent for Federal Employees in 2005

Federal employees in 2005 will receive an average pay raise of 3.5 percent, under a measure signed by **President Bush** in late 2004.

The pay raise for government employees was included in a 2005 catchall funding bill approved by the president in December. The average 3.5 percent pay raise applies to general schedule (GS) and federal wage system (FWS) employees and to civilian employees in the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, according to the funding law.

The 3.5 percent average pay raise for federal employees will put them on a par with the same level of raise approved for the military.

In order for federal employees to receive the average 3.5 percent pay raise at the earliest possible pay period in January, the president at the end of 2004 issued an executive order spelling out how much of the 3.5 percent pay raise will be a "locality pay" adjustment that varies according to where an employee works. The Federal Salary Council, established under U.S. law, recommended a breakdown of 2.5 percent nationwide and 1 percent locality.

The total pay raise for GS federal employees varies from 3.25 percent in the Kansas City area to 4.3 percent in the San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland, Calif., area. For federal employees in the Balti-

more-Washington area, the executive order set a 3.71 percent raise.

New York area workers will receive a 3.96 percent raise, while Boston area workers will get 3.81 percent.

DHS Secrecy Policy Reversal A Step Forward, Says Union

The Department of Homeland Security has decided to reverse a policy that required all new employees to sign nondisclosure agreements for handling unclassified information.

"The Department of Homeland Security finally is moving in the right direction," AFGE **President John Gage** said of DHS's decision. "However, there still is language that concerns us, specifically regarding the 'For Official Use Only' [FOUO] information category."

DHS's decision to keep the FOUO category is an "invitation for injustice," he said. "The potential for misuse here is astronomical. The policy still is not clear regarding who can designate FOUO and how employees who are found in violation of

the agreement will be disciplined. Additionally, we still are concerned with the overly broad, subjective designation of sensitive but unclassified information."

Along with being required to sign nondisclosure agreements, the form also allowed the department to investigate employees at any given time. "This unprecedented access to employees' homes and personal belongings is illegal and horribly unjustified," Gage said.

"The original directive was nothing more than a fear tactic being used by DHS to censure its employees," Gage continued. "We are pleased that DHS has recognized its error and is taking the steps to correct it. We only hope that the agency continues on that positive path."

AFGE, Others Join Forces... *continued from page 1*

are a poor substitute for the current system that protects American families from unexpected life change and tragedy.

Recently, the American public gained insight into a proposal under consideration by the White House as a result of a memo leaked to the press. The proposal would have slashed benefits by more than 32 percent by 2052 and 46 percent by 2075 by changing

the formula for calculating benefits.

AFGE will remain an active member of the coalition opposed to the creation of private investment accounts. In the coming weeks, AFGE members will be asked to become involved in this effort. Additional information is available on the AFGE web site at www.afge.org/socialsecurity or www.afge.org/ssa.

District 10 Wins AFGE Bonus Bucks Competition

AFGE's District 10 is the big winner of the annual Bonus Bucks contest, the union's annual membership drive.

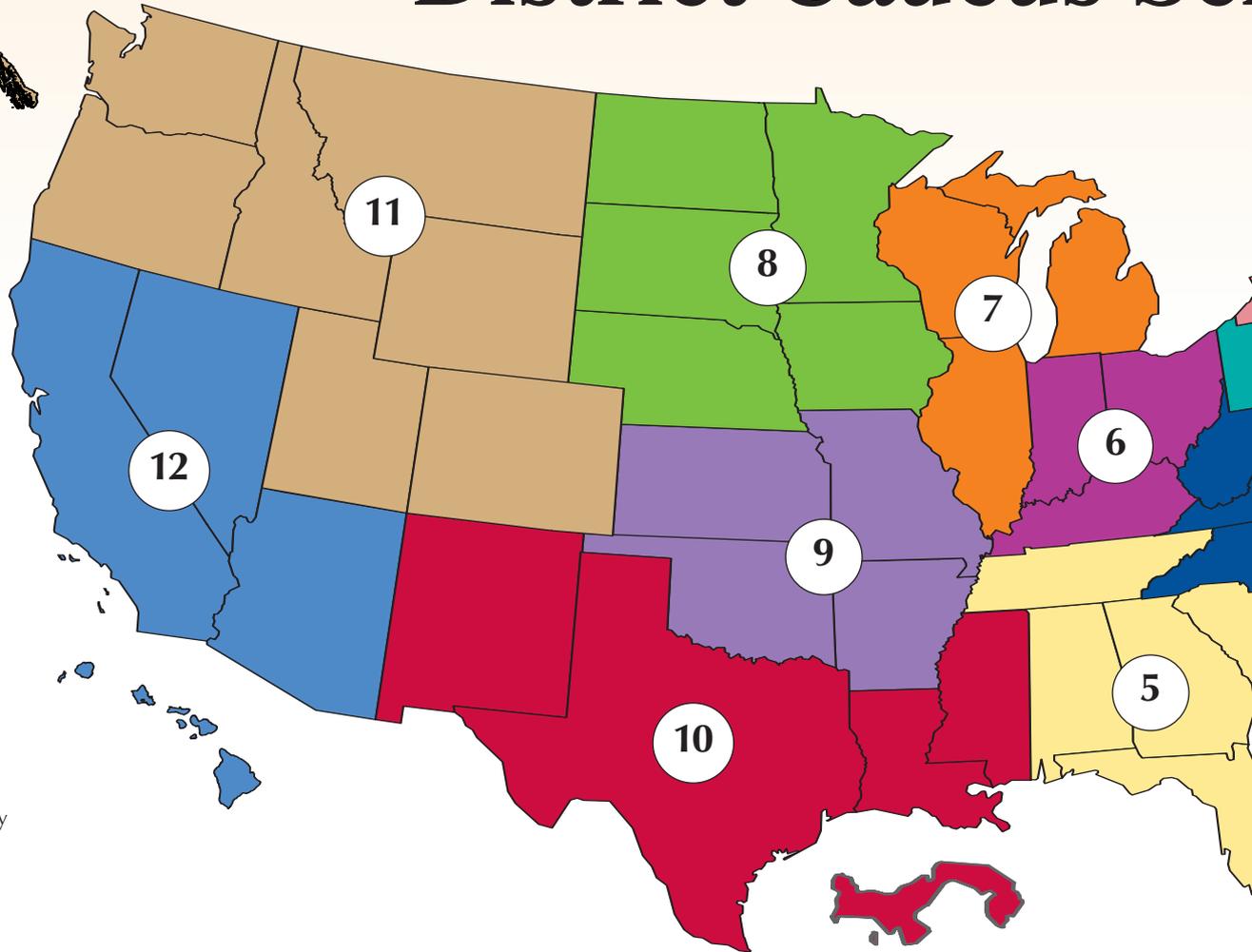
The 10th District received a total of 1,252 Bonus Bucks for its member recruiting efforts during the Jan. 19-June 30, 2004, Bonus Bucks program. Ramiro L. Gonzalez of Local 3307 was the big winner in the 10th District, receiving a total of 98 Bonus Bucks.



"Our 10th District members are amazing. They really put their hearts into bringing more of their co-workers into the AFGE family," said 10th District **National Vice President Roy Flores**. "The bonus bucks program is a great incentive for rewarding our members for the outstanding jobs they do to help increase membership."

AFGE members received a total of 7,294 Bonus Bucks in cash or gifts. John Lynady of Local 1647 in District 3 led all AFGE members, with a total of 1,647 Bonus Bucks; District 3 came in second place behind District 10, with 873 Bonus Bucks. The 2005 Bonus Bucks program runs from Jan. 24 to April 22.

2005 District Caucus Schedule



District 2:

NY, NJ, CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
 Check-In: Fri., May 13, 2005
 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 Sat., May 14, 2005
 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 14, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Hilton Newark Gateway
 Hotel
 Gateway Center
 Raymond Blvd.
 Newark, NJ 07102
 (973-445-8667) or
 (800-445-8667)

District 3:

DE, PA
 Check-In: Fri., May 13, 2005
 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Sat., May 14, 2005
 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 14, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Embassy Suites Hotel
 Philadelphia Airport
 9000 Bartram Ave.
 Philadelphia, PA 19153-3199
 (215-365-4500)

District 4:

MD, NC, VA, WV
 Check-In: Tuesday, May 24, 2005
 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.
 Wednesday, May 25, 2005
 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Wed., May 25, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Sheraton Columbia Hotel
 1207 Wincopin Circle
 Columbia, MD 21044
 (410-730-3900)

District 5:

AL, FL, GA, SC, TN,
 Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico
 Check-In: Sun., May 1, 2005
 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Monday, May 2, 2005
 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Monday, May 2, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Gaylord Opryland
 2802 Opryland
 Nashville, TN 37218
 (615-458-2841)

District 6:

IN, KY, OH
 Check-In: Tues., May 10, 2005
 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 Wed., May 11, 2005
 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Wed., May 11, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Radisson Hotel City Centre
 31 West Ohio St.
 Indianapolis, IN 46204
 (317-635-2000)

District 7:

IL, MI, WI
 Check-In: Fri., May 6, 2005
 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 Sat., May 7, 2005
 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 7, 2005
 10:00 a.m.
 Location: Sheridan Madison Hotel
 706 John Nolen Dr.
 Madison, WI 53713
 (608-251-2300)

District 8:

IA, MN, NE, ND, SD
 Check-In: Sat., May 7, 2005
 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 7, 2005
 10:00 a.m.
 Location: The Thunderbird Hotel
 2201 East 78th St.
 Bloomington, MN 55425
 (952-854-3411)

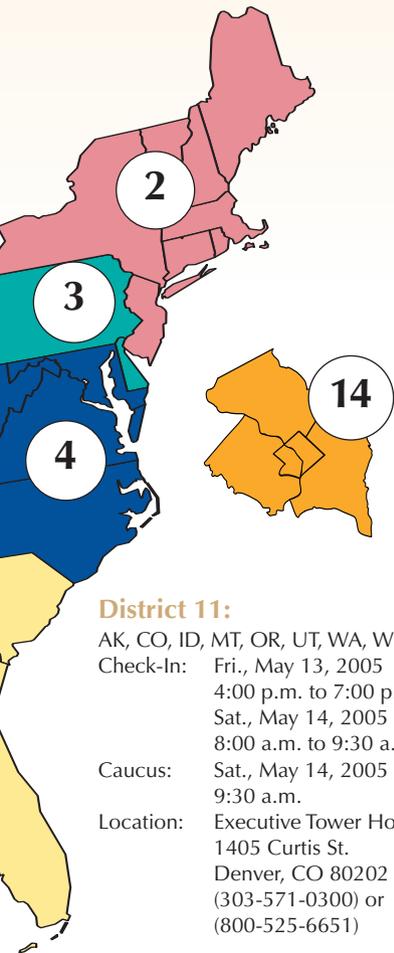
District 9:

AR, KS, MO, OK
 Check-In: Sat., May 21, 2005
 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 21, 2005
 10:00 a.m.
 Location: Clarion Hotel
 3333 S. Glenstone
 Springfield, MO 65804
 (417-883-6550)

District 10:

LA, MS, TX, NM, Panama
 Check-In: Fri., May 6, 2005
 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 Sat., May 7, 2005
 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 Caucus: Sat., May 7, 2005
 9:00 a.m.
 Location: Sheraton Grand Hotel
 4440 West John Carpenter
 Freeway
 Irving, TX 75063
 (972-929-8400)

Schedules



District 11:

AK, CO, ID, MT, OR, UT, WA, WY, Guam, Okinawa

Check-In: Fri., May 13, 2005
4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Sat., May 14, 2005
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Caucus: Sat., May 14, 2005
9:30 a.m.

Location: Executive Tower Hotel
1405 Curtis St.
Denver, CO 80202
(303-571-0300) or
(800-525-6651)

District 12:

AZ, CA, HI, NV

Check-In: Fri., May 6, 2005
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sat., May 7, 2005
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Caucus: Sat., May 7, 2005
9:00 a.m.

Location: Riviera Resort & Racquet Club
1600 North Indian Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760-327-8311)

District 14:

District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia

Check-In: Fri., May 20, 2005
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Sat., May 21, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Caucus: Sat., May 21, 2005
1:00 p.m.

Location: Holiday Inn on the Hill
415 New Jersey Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202-638-1616)

DISTRICT CAUCUS RULES

The National Executive Council has approved these Rules to govern the 2005 District Caucus elections.

Rule 1. All National Vice Presidents, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinators, and National Women's Advisory Coordinators of the American Federation of Government Employees are to be nominated and elected in 2005 at a District Caucus to be held within each of the 12 Districts as set forth in Article V, Section 3 of the AFGE National Constitution, as amended, subsequent to April 30, and prior to June 1. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall place in *The Government Standard* a complete list of the Caucus Rules and the place, date, and time of each Caucus no later than the February issue of *The Government Standard*. The elected National Vice President, National Women's Advisory Coordinator, and National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator shall be installed prior to the adjourning of the Caucus.

Rule 2. The meeting place, exact time, and date of the Caucus shall be selected by the National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts no later than November 30 of the year preceding the election year. Written notices shall be mailed to each Local President and Treasurer within the District by the National Vice President, on or before March 1st of the election year. These notices shall specify: the requirements for election of local delegates; the exact time, date, complete address of the meeting place of the Caucus; the deadline and mail address for registration 30 days prior to the caucus; and exact hours of check-in.

Rule 3. Locals in good standing within each District may participate through the medium of a delegate(s). The membership of the local has the right to make the determination of participation in the Caucus after proper notification to the membership.

Each local is obliged by law to provide requisite notice to its members that a secret ballot election for delegate(s) will be held, even if the local's officers perceive that the membership does not wish to elect a delegate(s). A local's membership then, in accordance with law, may vote not to elect a delegate.

(a) The local membership has the right to determine the number of delegates to elect to the Caucus, within the above authorization. The local membership has the right to determine the number of delegates to fund to the Caucus, within the above authorization. A decision by a local to authorize funds for less than the full number of delegates elected does not preclude the remaining delegates from participating, at their own expense, as delegates.

(b)(1) If a local is entitled to one delegate, the full voting strength is cast by that delegate.

(b)(2) In a situation where a local has elected its full complement of delegates, but not all delegates appear at the Caucus, those who are seated are entitled to a proportional share of the local's full entitlement of votes. If a local is entitled to more than one delegate, the voting strength is divided equally among those properly elected delegates participating in the caucus.

(b)(3) If a local is entitled to more than one delegate and the local has not elected its full complement,

the local should conduct a delegate election to fill some or all of the remaining delegate slots. Or, the local may vote to not conduct a delegate election so only its already elected delegate(s), including ex officio delegates (by virtue of election to office), may participate in the caucus. In order for the delegate(s) to cast the full membership strength of the local, a notice of nomination must have been given and a local membership meeting held to allow the membership to decide to not hold a delegate election and to designate the delegate(s) to represent it at the caucus. If the local membership votes to have its delegate(s) cast its full complement of votes, a copy of the notice of nomination and a copy of the meeting minutes must accompany the delegate credential.

(c) A plurality of the valid votes cast is required for election of delegates, alternate delegates, and proxy delegates. If the number of delegate candidates exceeds the number of delegate positions to be filled, then the candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will be elected as delegates, and the remaining candidates will be elected as alternate delegates unless otherwise stated in local bylaws.

(d) To be in good standing, a local shall have submitted all remittances through the month of February of the election year to the National Office.

(e) Locals whose per capita tax remittance through the month of February of the election year have not been received in the National Office as of the date of the Caucus will be disqualified, except as provided in Rule 5(b).

Rule 4. (a) The number of Caucus delegates a local is entitled to is determined in the same manner as Convention delegates under Article VI, Sec. 2, of the AFGE National Constitution as follows: Locals having a membership of 100 or less shall be entitled to one delegate; 101 to 200 members, two delegates; 201 to 300 members, three delegates; 301 to 400 members, four delegates; 401 to 500 members, five delegates; 501 to 750 members, six delegates; 751 to 1,000 members, seven delegates; 1,001 to 2,000 members, eight delegates; 2,001 and over, ten delegates; provided that any local whose charter has not been in existence for one year is entitled to representation at a District Caucus in accordance with the above, on the average of per capita tax paid monthly since its admission.

(b) Membership strength will be based on the average number of paid members for the previous 12-month period through December of the year preceding that year in which the Caucus is held.

Rule 5. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall furnish the National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts a list of locals in good standing in the respective District showing the number of delegate(s) and the number of votes each local is entitled to cast, along with a list of disqualified locals, with reasons for disqualification.

(a) Each local shall be notified by the National Secretary-Treasurer of its membership strength on or before February 15 of the election year. Each local shall be notified by the National Secretary-Treasurer of its standing prior to April 1st of the election year.

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DISTRICT CAUCUS RULES *(continued from page 5)*

(b) Locals delinquent in the payment of per capita taxes to the National Office shall be disqualified with the following exceptions: a local owing a balance through February shall be eligible to participate if, at the time of registration 30 days prior to the Caucus, the local shows satisfactory evidence of payment to the National Secretary-Treasurer. A local also shall be eligible to participate in the Caucus if it presents cash, a money order, a certified check, a cashier's check, or a check drawn on the local's account which, at the time of submission, must be verified by the bank as having sufficient funds to cover the check, made payable to AFGE in the amount due, to the Caucus Chairperson at the time of the Caucus. It is a delegate's responsibility to provide the telephone number of the bank and to ensure that the bank is open for business for purpose of verification of sufficient funds at the time of check-in.

Locals in which an alleged criminal act has resulted in the local being delinquent in per capita tax will not be listed as delinquent as long as all conditions of an approved repayment agreement have been and continue to be met. This exemption will only apply if criminal charges have been filed with local, state, or federal law enforcement officials. In a situation where the repayment schedule extends beyond three years, the local shall be eligible to participate in the next Caucus, if otherwise eligible. This three-year period shall commence upon the date of the signed repayment agreement.

Rule 6. Delegates, alternate delegates, and proxy delegates to the Caucus must be elected by the local they represent. Officers of the locals, by virtue of their election to office, may serve as delegates, if prescribed by the applicable local constitutions. The election must be by secret ballot after at least 15 days notice to all members of the election date, such notices to be mailed to each member's last known home address. Nominations and elections may be held at the same time provided such notice is given.

Rule 7. The National Office shall furnish official credentials to the President of each local. When the delegate(s) to the Caucus have been elected, the local shall execute an official credential in triplicate. The Credential will show date, name of delegate, local number, complete address, type of local meeting, whether a delegate, alternate delegate, or proxy delegate and name, location, and number of the local if for a delegate or alternate delegate. It also shall contain certification that the delegate was elected by secret ballot in the local after 15 days notice, in accordance with AFGE election rules and procedures.

Delegates must be elected in accordance with the requirements of the Caucus Rules, AFGE's National Constitution, the local's Constitution and Bylaws, and the statutory requirements pertaining to union elections as interpreted by the Department of Labor.

(a) If the delegate is a proxy delegate, his/her credential must show the name, location, and number of the local being represented by the proxy.

(b) A separate set of credentials must be executed for each elected delegate, alternate delegate, or proxy delegate.

(c) The original of the credential must be forwarded to the National Vice President of the District holding the election for which the credential is issued, with a certified true copy of the notice of the meeting which was mailed to each member, and a copy of the minutes and/or tally sheet of the delegate election meeting. Delegates who serve by virtue of their election to local office must provide a copy of the approved local constitution provision guaranteeing such "automatic" delegate status, as well as the notices of nomination and election, and the official record (i.e., tally or minutes) of the officer election. In filling a vacancy without an election, only a person who is appointed or succeeds from a position in which the person was a delegate by virtue of election to the office may be a delegate by virtue of the office in the new position. Credentials will not be acceptable unless accompanied by these documents.

(d) The duplicate copy must be issued to the delegate and must be presented at the Caucus. Delegates who fail to produce their duplicate credential may be certified by the Credentials Committee upon presentation of proper identification and certification of their delegate status from the Credentials Committee records.

(e) The triplicate copy of the credential must be retained by the local with a certified true copy of the notice of meeting which was mailed to each member, and a copy of the minutes and/or tally sheet of the delegate election meeting.

(f) All copies of credentials and required documents must be postmarked at least 30 days prior to the Caucus, except in extraordinary circumstances, when the Caucus Credentials Committee may waive the 30 day period.

Rule 8. Locals within the District may be represented by a proxy delegate provided, however, that such a delegate is an elected delegate of his/her home local within that District and otherwise qualified in accordance with the AFGE National Constitution. The proxy delegate must be elected by secret ballot and by name. If only one proxy delegate is nominated, he or she will be elected by acclamation.

Rule 9. (a) The National Vice President of each of the 12 Districts shall assemble all credentials and supporting documents received in individual file folders in numerical order by local. He/she shall prepare a complete list of delegates by name and local number for which credentials are received.

(b) Prior to the convening of the Caucus, a Credentials Committee shall be selected by the National Vice President. A temporary Sergeant-at-Arms also will be selected by the National Vice President. The Credentials Committee shall consist of delegates and shall be composed of at least three members, and if a larger Committee is required, it shall contain an odd number of members, so that the Committee can decide by majority vote any credentials questions presented to it, thus avoiding the possibility of tie votes of the Committee. The Committee shall be representative of the District, considering the location and composition of members and the geographical areas of the District.

In order for a candidate to have a representative on the Credentials Committee, the individual must notify in writing the National Vice President of the District holding the election of his/her candidacy at least 48 hours prior to the Caucus date.

(c) The National Vice President shall deliver to the Credentials Committee:

(1) The file of all credentials and supporting documents received, arranged in individual file folders in numerical order by local number.

(2) The completed list of delegates.

(3) A list of locals in good standing showing the number of delegates and the number of votes each local is entitled to cast.

(4) A list of all locals that are ineligible because of arrearages in submitting per capita taxes or other indebtedness.

Rule 10. There shall be an Election Committee consisting of delegates and composed of at least three members, and if a larger Committee is required, it shall contain an odd number of members. The members of the Election Committee shall be selected in the following manner: upon the convening of the Caucus, the Caucus will elect by majority vote a Chairperson, who will serve as Chairperson of the Election Committee. Each candidate will select one person to serve on the Election Committee. Any further members of the Election Committee shall be elected by majority vote of the Caucus.

The Caucus Chairperson will receive from the National Secretary-Treasurer a sealed election kit containing sufficient ballots, tally sheets, and charts for the names of the candidates and letter symbols for at least three ballots.

In the alternative, at the discretion of the National Vice President, the District may employ an independent organization to conduct the election under the direction of the Caucus Chairperson and the Election Committee. Furthermore, at the discretion of the National Vice President, the District may conduct the election by electronic means (other than "touch screen voting"), with the prior approval of the National President.

If printed and issued by the National Secretary-Treasurer, the ballots will be issued in denominations of 500, 100, 50, 25, 10, 5, and 1 votes, and each denomination shall be of a different color. The candidates will determine their position on the ballot by drawing lots. The names of the nominees will be placed on the chart at the front of the Caucus room and designated alphabetically, according to the draw (A, B, C), large enough to be clearly read.

If printed at the Caucus by an independent election organization, the ballots will be issued in denominations of 500, 100, 10, and 1 votes (or multiples thereof), and each denomination shall be of a different color. Names of candidates shall appear on the ballot in the order determined by the draw.

A Voting Authorization (V-2) Form will be made available to a delegate who wishes to designate another delegate from the same local to cast his or

her votes. The delegates then will vote their individual ballot as follows:

(a) When one or more of the delegates elected by a local is not certified by the Credentials Committee, the total voting strength of the local shall be proportionately divided among those delegates who do receive credentials. When a local has failed to provide the membership an opportunity, with proper notice, to elect up to the local's full complement of delegates, the voting strength of the local shall be reduced proportionately. The failure of a delegate to vote, after being certified by the Credentials Committee, does not allow distribution of that delegate's votes among his local's remaining delegates, unless a properly executed V-2 Form has been given those delegates.

(b) The Election Committee will issue ballots in appropriate amount to delegates on presentation of properly authenticated credentials, immediately prior to the delegates entering the voting booth.

(c) The Union must provide a voting booth or enclosure where members can mark their ballots in complete privacy to assure secrecy of their vote.

(d) Marked ballots should be placed immediately in a sealed container by the voter, not to be opened until the votes are tabulated.

(e) After the tabulations of all votes, the results must be read, posted, or written on a board clearly stating the number of votes received by each candidate.

(f) Where there are more than two candidates for the office of National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women's Advisory Coordinator, and no

candidate receives a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes.

(g) When only one candidate is nominated for an office to be filled, the Chairperson of the Election Committee shall cast a unanimous ballot for that candidate.

(h) The Caucus Election Committee must certify the eligibility of all candidates.

All records of the Caucus must be certified as complete and accurate by the Caucus Election Committee Chairperson and packaged, sealed, and forwarded to the National Secretary-Treasurer. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall retain the records for one year, or until any protest is resolved and applicable time frames for appeal have elapsed, whichever of these is later.

Rule 11. The Caucus Election Committee shall receive and resolve, by majority vote, any protest or challenge to the manner in which the election for National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women's Advisory Coordinator is conducted, including the eligibility of delegates and the qualification of candidates.

A Caucus Election Committee only may entertain an election complaint which has been delivered or postmarked to that Committee, or any of its members, prior to, during, or within five calendar days after the adjournment of the Caucus.

In any protest the Election Committee will determine whether the protest was timely, whether the alleged

misconduct occurred, whether the misconduct was a violation, and whether the violation could have affected the outcome of the election. Only if the outcome could have been affected will the election be rerun. Any appeal from the decision by the Election Committee shall be submitted to the National President, pursuant to Appendix A, Part III of the AFGE National Constitution.

Rule 12. In order for a candidate to be elected as a District National Vice President, National Fair Practices Affirmative Action Coordinator, or National Women's Advisory Coordinator, a candidate must (a) meet the following qualifications: be a member in good standing; been a governmental employee for three consecutive years; been a member in good standing of the Federation for the three consecutive years immediately prior to the date of nomination for the office being sought; not be a member in any labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO; and (b) receive a majority of the valid votes cast.

Rule 13. Councils shall not be permitted to send delegate(s) to the Caucus.

Rule 14. Full-time National Representatives and full-time paid employees of AFGE shall not be permitted to attend the Caucus as delegates, per Article VIII, Section 2(d), of the AFGE National Constitution.

Rule 15. Any local wishing to merge with a local in another District must have all steps outlined in the *NEC Policy on Multi-District Locals* finalized and approved by the NEC no later than March 31 of the Caucus year, for purposes of voting at the appropriate District Caucus. (Copies of the *NEC Policy on Multi-District Locals* are available from the National Secretary-Treasurer.)

Defense Department Expects to Issue Proposed Personnel System Regulations Soon

The Department of Defense's proposed regulations on the new national security personnel system (NSPS) will be open for public comments until sometime in mid February, according to department officials.

The proposed regulations, expected to be published in January, will be subject to a 30-day period for written comments. The agency said that up to 300,000 civilian DoD employees are expected to be brought into the NSPS over 18 months, with the first group of employees numbering about 60,000. DoD currently has about 700,000 civilian employees and managers in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and other DoD operations. The rules had not been issued at press time.

The NSPS includes systems governing basic pay, staffing, classification, performance management, labor relations, and employee appeals. The department was authorized to set up the system under the National Defense Authorization Act.

Meanwhile, DoD has announced its planned schedule

for moving general schedule and general manager employees to the system. The first group, known as "Spiral One" locations, will begin moving to the system in July 2005, according to department officials. The second round, known as "Spiral Two," is planned for around January 2007 and will cover the remaining employees.

Spiral Two, according to the National Defense Authorization Act, can not be implemented until the department has certified that it has established the NSPS performance management system. A "Spiral Three" would cover the DoD labs; this third relocation cannot occur, however, until Congress removes current legislative restrictions.

The labor relations portion of NSPS is also targeted to begin as early as July 2005. It will be implemented across the entire department and not limited to Spiral One activities.

Additional information on NSPS implementation is available at www.defenselink.mil.

The four people in the Service Department at AFGE's headquarters handle hundreds of thousands of documents, including the materials used for "lunch 'n learns."

They are responsible for seeing that members get information; for printing the Communications Department's Rep Wing

Melvern's responsibilities vary depending on the political season. He, for instance, handles the design and layout for The Equalizer as well as the Rep Wing. He also designs and handles layout for flyers, brochures, buttons, banners, business cards and many other items that find their way into the field.



The staff of the Service Department includes (front row, left to right) Patricia Lewis, Tony Melvern, Lakesha Yancey, and Tim Colbert.

and The Equalizer, the newsletter from the Women's/Fair Practices Departments, and for a myriad of other responsibilities.

The department's people say they will move heaven and earth to meet the needs of AFGE's headquarters and its members.

Department supervisor **Patricia Lewis** first came to AFGE because she heard of an opening in the data processing unit. Twenty-five years later, she's still at AFGE but in the Service Department, where she is responsible for a team of three people.

Her success in moving from data processing was as much luck as preparation. "I went from data processing to the Finance Department on accounts receivables," Lewis said. "From there I went to accounts payables, then PAC. While at PAC, one day [then-National President] John Sturdivant asked me out of the blue if I would be interested in being the supervisor of the Service Department. That was in 1994."

Lewis said the Service Department handles graphics, printing, mailing, and a number of functions. She supervises three people: a printer/reproduction technician, an assistant printer/reproduction technician, and a word processing/mail clerk.

Printing/reproduction technician **Tony Melvern** has worked at AFGE headquarters for nearly 13 years and has brought a "can-do" attitude to his job.

Colbert, who has worked at AFGE for 17 years, is responsible for tasks such as printing, copying, folding and cutting of flyers and brochures, and package distribution throughout AFGE headquarters.

Colbert said his most memorable experience was when he went to the 1994 National Convention. "It was exciting to see how AFGE officers are elected, to see the running of the conference; it was great being around pretty much our entire membership and seeing how AFGE business is done. Plus I got the chance to see Al Gore up close and personal."

Rounding out the team is **Lakesha Yancey**, the department's word processing/mail clerk. Yancey, who has worked at AFGE since April 2003, formerly worked for two federal agencies as well as for a nonprofit.

Yancey handles data entry, mailings, supply orders, and other administrative responsibilities. "I like working at AFGE. The staff is easy to get along with, as are most people in the building. It's a nice atmosphere and a good place to work."

Everyone knows that **Tim Colbert**, the second printing/reproduction technician, is a Washington Redskins fan. "You could say I have a real fondness for the Redskins."

Labor Department Fact Sheet Addresses Rights of Members, Responsibilities of Officers

A fact sheet issued by the U.S. Department of Labor spells out union members' rights, as well as union officer responsibilities.

Members, for instance, have the right to participate in union activities and to freedom of speech and assembly. They also have the right to voice their opinions on setting rates for dues, fees, and assessments and to inspect collective bargaining agreements, among other rights. Moreover, they have a right to sue and are protected against improper discipline.

The notice also says that union members have the right to nominate candidates for office, run for office, cast a secret ballot, and protest the conduct of an election.

Union officers are responsible for safely managing union funds and prop-

erty and for providing proper management controls. Officers or any employees handling money must be bonded.

The notice says that elections of officers of local unions must be held at least once every three years. It adds that unions must conduct regular elections in accordance with their constitution and bylaws and preserve records and mail notice of elections to every member at least 15 days prior to the election.

Union rights and officer responsibilities are set under the standards of conduct of the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA), as well as other federal laws.

The fact sheet on union member rights and officer responsibilities under the Civil Service Reform Act is available at www.dol.gov/esa and on AFGE's Web site at www.afge.org.