



# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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for current and retired government workers and their families since 1933  
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

## AFGE Scores Major Victory in TSA Case

**M**ore than three years after AFGE took the case of a Transportation Security Officer who was fired for union activity to the courts, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit on Sept. 5 reversed a district court ruling that it had no jurisdiction to hear a TSA screener case on constitutional claims, or that the union had no standing to bring the case to court.

"AFGE is immensely satisfied with this ruling," AFGE General Counsel Mark Roth said. "This landmark decision on the court's ability to hear cases on TSA screeners' constitutional rights will set

the precedent for many cases to come. AFGE is prepared to again argue our case before the District Court."

In early 2004, the TSA disciplined and fired a TSO at Oakland Airport for sending his grievance about baggage

*"This landmark decision on the court's ability to hear cases on TSA security screeners' constitutional rights will set the precedent for many cases to come."*

screening practices to AFGE. The union later obtained direct evidence from the employee's supervisor that TSA planned to fire that employee because of his union activity. AFGE filed suit on April 1, 2004,

alleging that the TSO's First Amendment constitutional rights were violated.

The Department of Justice, representing the TSA, argued that the court should dismiss the case based on a lack of subject matter jurisdiction. It argued that because TSOs were exempt from the protections of the Civil Service Reform Act and because the TSA administrator was given discretion in determining employment terms and conditions, Congress intended to preclude judicial review of screeners' constitutional claims. DoJ additionally argued that AFGE lacked standing to sue.

In response, AFGE argued that the courts do have the right to review unconstitutional terminations. Per the Aviation Transportation Security Act of 2001, Congress took away the right of employees of the TSA to go to the Federal Labor

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## OPERATION DO IT NOW

### *Fate of NSPS Hangs On House-Senate Conference*

**T**he American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is launching Operation "Do It Now"—a nationwide, grassroots mobilization to secure victory in the fight against the National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

NSPS is designed to strip employees of their collective bargaining rights and eliminate fair treatment in adverse action cases. It will lower employees' standard of living and open the door to abuse and favoritism with a non-transparent pay system, where wages and benefits are not performance driven.

Both the House and Senate have addressed NSPS in their independent drafts of the Defense Authorization Bill. While the Senate version does contain language that would limit the implementation of the Defense Department's new personnel system—unlike the House version—it would not reverse the most damaging components.

The dismantling of NSPS is contingent on the final passage of a bill that includes the language written and passed by the House. Operation "Do It Now" is a call to action for Congress, and through the efforts of this initiative, AFGE is confident that the egregious portions of NSPS will be overturned.

For more information go to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org). ●



# Your Steak's at Stake

**W**hen you go the supermarket to buy a package of steaks for the grill, you might not stop and think about our government and the consequences of elections.

Yet a recent disturbing action by the U.S. House reminds us that not only do elected officials' actions affect our lives as government employees—they affect all Americans' lives and health as citizens and consumers.

In a last-minute backroom deal alarmingly reminiscent of the old corrupt Congress that voters threw out in 2006, an amendment was inserted into the new farm bill that would lower food safety standards by encouraging meat and poultry producers to forego rigorous federal safety enforcement and instead opt for less stringent state guidelines.

This provision also would remove the ban on shipping state-inspected meat to other states. This means not only that the entire country could be harmed due to just one state's laxity or corruption, but that if this occurred, it would be impossible to conduct a national recall. States do not have the

capacity to track recalled meat and poultry shipped outside their borders.

Undoing a cornerstone of the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 that has provided Americans with the highest meat safety standards in the world for more than a century, Congress would put us more at risk of food

**“We can change all of this in 2008 by electing a president and Congress committed to empowering government employees to serve the American people...”**

poisoning at a time when Americans already have been assaulted by E-coli contaminated spinach, salmonella-tainted peanut butter and melamine-spiked pet food.

Report after report makes clear that state inspection programs have lower standards than the federal government. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's inspector general found in September 2006 that Mississippi state inspectors allowed multiple meat processing plants to continue operating despite finding cutting boards heavily contaminated with day-old meat residues, soot-like material on swine carcasses, and inadequate monitoring of cooking temperatures that could expose consumers to bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses.

Who in their right mind would want to eat meat produced under these conditions?

Adding insult to (perhaps literal) injury, this provision could lead to a drastic loss of experienced, highly-qualified federal meat and poultry inspectors, as their work would be shifted to weaker state inspection programs.

I find it especially disappointing that the current Congress, whom AFGE members did so much to elect, would side with big business — the American Meat Institute and the National Meat Association — against the public health. But that serves to remind us of two inextorable truths:

First, it's just as important that we hold elected officials' feet to the fire in between elections as during them. The lure of special

interest money can rear its ugly head at any time. We must hold accountable every politician who yields to these temptations and betrays our trust.

Second, we have a margin of just one vote in the Senate and 31 votes in the House. That means we've got to work hard to expand our majorities to the point that special interest-dominated coalitions cannot gain the votes to obstruct or roll back progress.

While this attempt to undermine food safety has come from Congress, it's also part and parcel of the Bush administration's deliberate policy of enabling corporate greed by eviscerating the federal government's capacity to protect workers, consumers and the public from abuses and wrongdoing by big business.

Just look at how the administration has slashed budgets and reduced staffing at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)—the latter, a major factor in recent deadly mine disasters in West Virginia and Utah.

Similarly, the Food and Drug Administration, responsible for non-meat food safety, cut the number of safety inspections it conducted by nearly half between 2003 and 2006, according to the Associated Press, and reduced field office staffing by 12 percent. And, surprise, surprise, in addition to spinach and peanut butter, we've had tainted tomatoes, cantaloupes, mushrooms and lettuce this year alone.

Beyond this, I believe the Bush administration's scheme to undermine the professional civil service through the misnamed National Security Personnel System at the Department of Defense was designed, in part, to give political appointees greater latitude to reduce oversight of the hundreds of billions of dollars DoD hands out in private contracts every year.

We can change all of this in 2008 by electing a president and Congress committed to empowering government employees to serve the American people, rather than the corrupt cronies of whoever is in the White House. All AFGE members should dedicate themselves to restoring government's proper role and making the public interest paramount over the next 14 months. ●

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# New Farm Bill Would Stop Federal Meat Inspection

## *AFGE and Other Groups Say Lowering Food Safety Standards Unacceptable*

**A** FGE is working to stop Congressional passage of legislation (H.R. 2419) that would stop federal meat inspection. The bill, which recently passed the House, lowers food safety standards by encouraging meat and poultry producers to forgo rigorous safety enforcement and opt for less stringent state guidelines. The provisions, which amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, were buried in the Farm Bill due to be taken up by Congress in the next few weeks.

"As Americans are being assaulted by contaminated products and foods, this new law could make things worse by trying to lower food safety standards for meat and poultry sold in the U.S.," said John Gage, AFGE president.

The Farm Bill also would remove the current ban on shipping state-inspected meat to other states. This would have a serious impact on consumers if products processed in a particular state are found to have been tainted and must be recalled.

"Individual states do not have the full capacity to track recalled meat and poultry in other states. The federal government, on the other hand, has the capability to ensure that contaminated and recalled products would be removed from store shelves," Gage said.

Reports by the United States Department of Agriculture's Inspector General and from the media clearly state that state inspection programs are more lenient on plant sanitation standards than federal inspectors. The USDA IG, for example, said in a September 2006 report that Mississippi state inspectors allowed a number of meat processing plants to continue operating despite finding various safety issues, including cutting boards heavily contaminated with meat residues from previous days' operations, soot-like material on swine carcasses in coolers, and the lack of monitoring of cooking temperatures that could potentially expose consumers to bacteria that cause food-borne illnesses.



The United Food and Commercial Workers, as well as consumer organizations such as Safe Food Coalition, Consumer Federation of America, National Consumers League, and Center for Food-borne Illness Research & Prevention, have joined AFGE in opposition to the bill.

"We view this bill to be a product of massive lobbying efforts by meat producers who are searching for more 'understanding' and 'flexible' enforcement by state inspectors without regards to public health. Lawmakers who support the bill must be held accountable for betraying the public trust," Gage said. ●

## Two AFGE Members Involved in Mine Rescue Mishap

**F**or the men and women of the Mine Safety and Health Administration the dangers of a mine rescue mission are all too familiar. But without hesitation, individuals like Gary L. Jensen and Frank E. Markosek—MSHA accident investigators and members of AFGE Local 3416—put their lives on the line for the safety of others.

On Aug. 16, while Jensen and Markosek were working in an underground effort to save six trapped Utah miners, tragedy struck. As the result of what official call a mountain bump—tons of settling rock above the mine tunnel—Jensen was killed and Markosek was critically injured.

"Mine Safety and Health Administration investigators are some of the bravest, most selfless individuals," said AFGE National President John Gage. "They risk their lives on a daily basis to ensure the well-being of our nation's miners, and their

passion and commitment to the mission of health and safety are unparalleled. We are deeply saddened by the loss of Gary Jensen and are hopeful that Frank Markosek will have a speedy and full recovery."

Jensen joined MSHA in June of 2001 as a coal mine inspector for the Craig, Colo., Field Office. In 2003 he became a roof control specialist for the Price, Utah, Field Office and most recently was assigned to the Special Investigations Group. In addition to his commitment to MSHA's mine rescue team, Jensen was an emergency medical technician and a hunter safety inspector.

Prior to his work at MSHA, Jensen dedicated 26 years to the Canyon Fuels Southern Utah Fuel Company Mine. He leaves behind his wife, four children, and three grandchildren.

Markosek, who has been with MSHA for eight years, works as a coal mine

inspector at the Price Field Office. Before joining MSHA, he worked at both the Kaiser and Deer Creek Mines.

"MSHA employees work tirelessly to ensure safe workplace conditions, despite staff shortages and budget cuts," said Gerry Swanke, AFGE national vice president for the 11th District, which includes Utah. "Institutional challenges, coupled with an inability to levee substantial fines on mining companies for safety violations, continue to introduce road blocks in the way of mine safety, which puts employees at risk."

There have been two funds established at Zion's Bank for those who wish to donate in lieu of flowers. Donations can be made to either The Gary L. Jensen account or the Crandall Rescue Workers Donate by mail at PO Box 60, Huntington, UT 84528 or by phone at 1-888-788-1099. ●

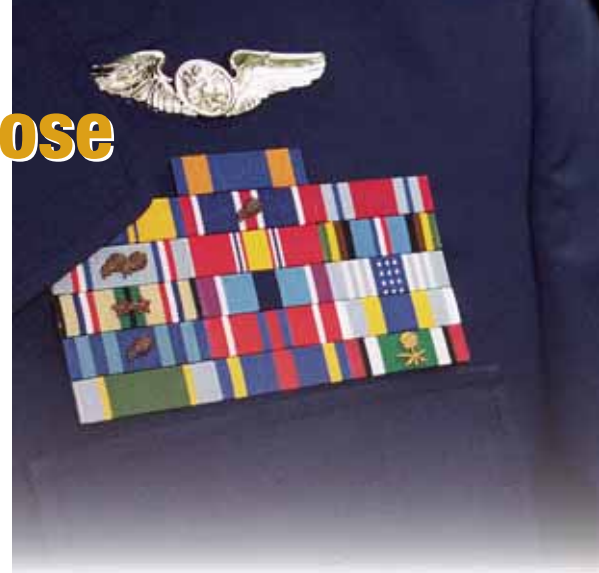
# Air Force Reserve Technicians Oppose Mandatory Civilian Uniforms

*American Federation of Government Employees Says Uniforms Are Not A Measure of Dedication*

Members of AFGE who are Air Force Reserve Technicians are strongly urging the Air Force Reserve Command to retract a provision that would require ARTs to wear military uniforms even while serving in civilian status. These civilian federal employees believe such a change only will bring about fear, confusion and disruption—

contrary to the so-called structure and continuity that the AFRC desires to erect.

“This change effects more than 10,000 ARTs, many of whom were active duty members who wanted to transition to a civilian lifestyle,” said AFGE Labor Relations Specialist Mark Gibson. “These individuals work to serve and protect this country. Wearing uniforms, or the



lack there of, will not change what they stand for.”

Many ARTs believe this mandate, like the National Security Personnel System—which is a Department of Defense (DoD) measure specifically designed to give the administration the ability to eliminate collective bargaining and would subject federal employees to adverse action without recourse—is a means to make it easier to

**“The AFRC provision is another costly DoD tactic aimed at manipulating and controlling federal civilian employees.”**

deploy federal civilian employees. Since ARTs are not “active” members of the Air Force Reserves they also do not qualify for the same medical and pay benefits that active members enjoy.

“Even though ARTs would be forced to follow the strict rules of other uniformed military employees, they would not reap the same benefits or be afforded the same protections,” Gibson added. “If AFRC is going to require ARTs to wear uniforms during their civilian duties then they should get the benefits and protections of members.”

“The AFRC provision is another costly DoD tactic aimed at manipulating and controlling federal civilian employees,” said AFGE National President John Gage. “This is not an issue of ARTs’ ability to do their jobs or their commitment to national security; it is a ploy to further dismantle workers rights.” ●



Be a Part of

## AFGE's 75th Anniversary Celebration!!!

AFGE is celebrating its 75th Anniversary and we want to hear from you. Be a part of history!

Write or email us a brief (two paragraph) summary about a unique or interesting experience you've had since becoming an AFGE member. Please include the year of the experience and a photo, if you have one. Your story and photo will be posted on a special web page AFGE is creating to commemorate our union's rich history.

Send us your story via email at [afge75@afge.org](mailto:afge75@afge.org) or mail your story to:

AFGE History,  
Communications Department  
80 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Photos for return must include a self-addressed return envelope (no postage necessary).

# Plans to Privatize **EEOC** Services Put on Hold

Following the unrelenting work of the National Council of EEOC Locals No. 216 and its members to stop the privatization of work, the National Call Center at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is hanging by a thread. EEOC had implemented the privatized call center to answer phones and provide information about the work of the Commission in 2004 and granted yearly extensions. The current extension ends September 20, 2007.

Both House and Senate appropriators this year and last expressed disappointment and concern about the performance of the call center. For FY08, both expressly forbid the use of funds for a contract call center. Although the House language was approved on the floor earlier this year, action on the Senate Committee language was not be considered until members of the Senate returned following the August recess.

The chair was forced into accepting a three month extension of time to transition the call center activities to EEOC. While a public vote originally was scheduled for July, an agreement was reached in secret, most likely due to the lack of votes and

support to extend the call center for an additional year, as well as in response to pressure from Congress and dissenting Commissioners. While the EEOC Chair initially sought a one-year and then a six-month extension, the life of the call center is more short-lived.

AFGE's plan calls for hiring sufficient staff, preferably skilled Investigative Support Assistants to handle the phone and mail.

As part of the three-month extension, the commissioners approved an expenditure of funds for a contract to ensure the orderly transition of the work back into the EEOC offices. But responses on the solicitation for price quotes for such a contractor were not due until August 22, 2007. Perhaps this is an omen of things to come—we will get to December 20, 2007, when the extension is up and the thread will break.

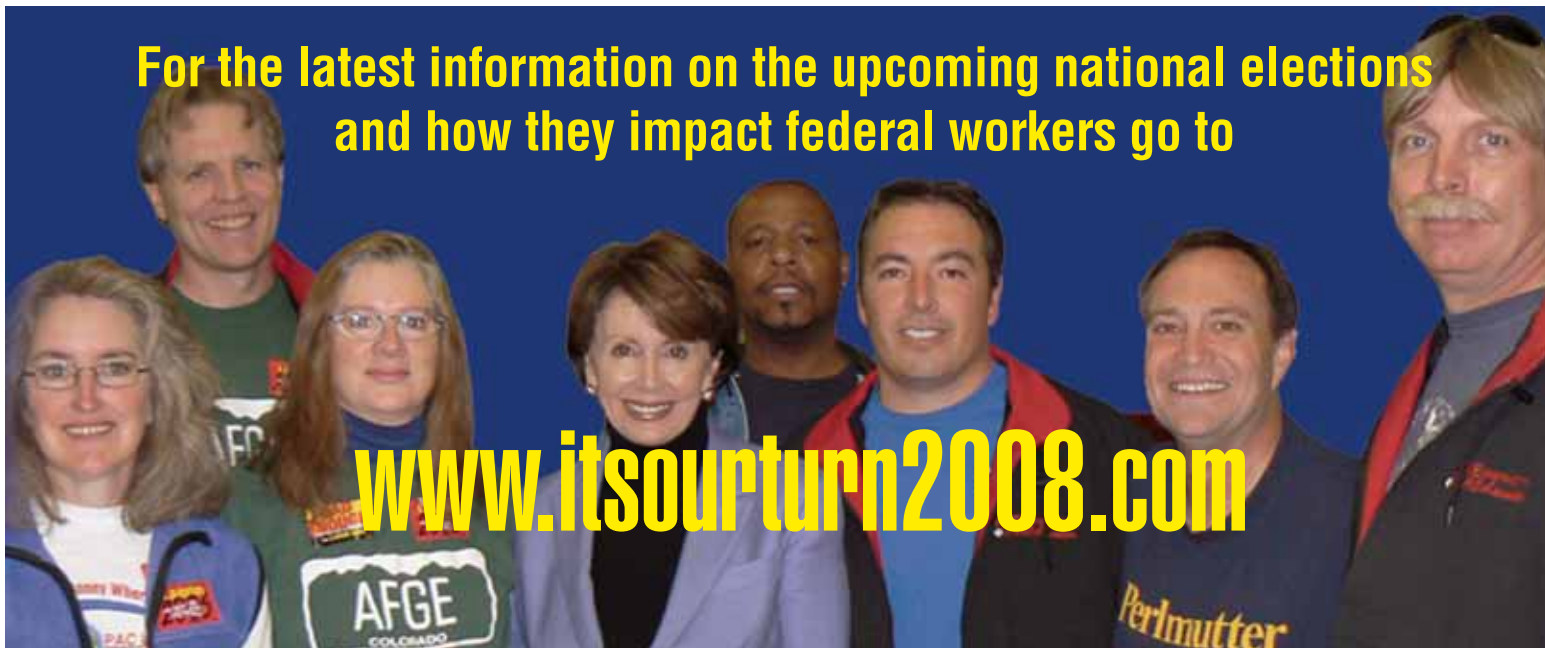
Will the public and employees find themselves in the midst of chaos? Will there be efforts to sabotage any program other than a stand alone call center?

AFGE provided a transition plan in advance of a public vote originally scheduled for July 10, 2007. AFGE's plan calls for hiring sufficient staff, preferably skilled Investigative Support Assistants (ISAs) to handle the phone and mail. In addition, it calls for upgrading technology at the EEOC's office to allow the offices to serve the public, and the agency's 800 number should be transferred back to offices from the call center, to allow the public to contact the nearest EEOC office. AFGE also believes there is a need for additional support and professional staff in offices in order to address the ever increasing workloads. ●



For the latest information on the upcoming national elections and how they impact federal workers go to

[www.itsourturn2008.com](http://www.itsourturn2008.com)



## VA Professionals Choose AFGE for Union Representation

Physicians, dentists and registered nurses at Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities across the country are voting overwhelmingly in support of AFGE. On August 22, professional employees at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wis. voted 102-47 in favor of union representation. VA employees at the VA medical center in Memphis, Tenn. followed suit when their professional employees voted 113-24 to become members of AFGE.

"We are proud to welcome these employees into AFGE," said J. David Cox, AFGE national secretary treasurer and former VA nurse. "These employees have made a clear choice for union representation. Together we will work hard to ensure quality workplace conditions and veterans care."

AFGE has been at the forefront of veterans' advocacy by tackling the challenges VA healthcare professionals face in the

workplace. AFGE has successfully lobbied against devastating VA outsourcing, excessive mandatory overtime, and chronic budget and staffing cuts.

While, current law (38 USC 7422) provides physicians, RNs and other health care professionals in the VA with rights to grieve, arbitrate and bargain, management has greatly weakened these rights through overbroad interpretations of the limited exceptions in the law. As a result, VA healthcare professionals have been stifled in their ability to voice concerns over staffing ratios, assignments, excessive mandatory overtime and other key issues that impact employee morale and patient safety.

"As employees, we made a clear choice and sent a strong message to the VA that we no longer wanted to be 'eat will' employees. We are proud of the work that we do and now we are proud, card carrying members of AFGE," said Ian

Smith president of AFGE Local 1732 in Madison, Wis.

As members of AFGE, Madison and Memphis Veterans Affairs Medical Center employees now have representation that is hard at work on the legislative and legal fronts addressing problems in collective bargaining, chronic under-funding and understaffing at VA medical facilities, as well as, problems implementing recent nurse and physician pay legislation, reimbursement of physician medical education costs and nurse promotions.

"AFGE is the VA employee union and together we will continue to succeed in protecting the rights of VA employees," said Kathleen Pachomski president of AFGE Local 3930 in Memphis.

AFGE represents more than 156,000 VA employees, professional and non-professional in over 130 VA medical centers, 57 regional offices, and other VA workplaces. ●

### Listen To AFGE's Own Radio Show

[www.afge.org/  
insidegovernment](http://www.afge.org/insidegovernment)



### AFGE at 2007 Blacks in Government National Training Conference

Several AFGE staff members took part in the recent Blacks in Government (BIG) National Training Conference in Nashville, Tenn. Ann Robinson, Danny Jefferson, Jenny Celestin and Michael Victorian interfaced with several hundred BIG members, including BIG National President Darlene Young, who also is an AFGE member.

"We are thrilled at how many AFGE members attended this year's conference," Young said.

In addition to attending several events, AFGE staffers manned a booth in the conference exhibit hall. AFGE Membership and Organization staff members Ann Robinson and Danny Jefferson discussed the benefits of membership and opportunities continue to grow AFGE at the local level. They also educated federal managers on how to work with local unions to form partnerships and maintain amiable relationships with local union leaders.

Women and Fair Practices EEO Specialist Jenny Celestin led several workshops during the conference, including an educational seminar educating attendees on federal Equal Employment statutes, and how to file successful discrimination claims. ●

# 2007 Human Rights Training Conference

AUGUST 20-24 • CHICAGO

(Right) National Human Rights Committee at the Human Rights Training Welcome Reception



(Below) Inside Government Radio show recorded live from the Human Rights Training on August 22



(Below) Women's and Fair Practices Departments staff at the registration desk



(Right) National Women's Advisory Coordinator Chair, Bennie Bridges, making the district roll call at the Plenary Session



(Left) Michelle Grooms, special assistant to the National Vice President for Women's and Fair Practices

(Above) Human Rights Training participants

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES  
Statement Of Activities  
For The First Two Quarters Of 2007

AFGE Statement of Activities

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>Mar-07</b>	<b>Jun-07</b>
Per capita tax and fees	\$10,626,067	\$21,439,678
Death benefit insurance premiums	245,954	496,170
Building rental income	563,592	1,200,506
Investment income	180,317	367,901
Net appreciation in value of investments	189,129	580,887
Legislative action contributions	213,866	298,974
Settlement payments	53,211	128,149
Education and training	7,264	49,148
Other	346,183	653,434
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b><u>12,425,583</u></b>	<b><u>25,214,847</u></b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>		
Salaries	4,536,149	8,709,067
Payroll taxes	561,514	895,942
Employee benefits	845,047	1,617,989
Net Periodic pension costs	769,845	1,541,595
Postretirement benefits other than pensions	683,913	1,367,827
Organizing rebates and programs	967,990	1,783,623
Death benefit premiums	35,621	240,139
Travel	349,651	904,921
District office lease	83,306	170,631
Interest expense	324,155	647,884
Depreciation	207,853	415,706
Affiliation dues and expenses	804,342	1,586,945
Assistance to councils	198,027	387,920
Real estate taxes	266,805	336,119
Building operating expenses	219,322	421,394
Contributions	57,773	192,748
Other general and administrative	1,620,415	3,811,263
<b>Total expense</b>	<b><u>12,531,728</u></b>	<b><u>25,031,713</u></b>
<b>(DEFICIENCY) EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSE</b>	<b><u>\$(106,145)</u></b>	<b><u>\$183,134</u></b>

\*These statements have not been audited.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Statement Of Expense By Activity  
For The First Two Quarters Of 2007

DISTRICT OFFICES	Mar-07	Jun-07
2	\$278,712	\$575,261
3	200,550	384,971
4	299,679	634,239
5	430,539	840,502
6	162,131	340,691
7	192,105	390,244
8	96,827	185,849
9	201,657	402,207
10	269,020	572,846
11	212,161	516,934
12	339,934	681,336
14	226,066	451,757
<b>Total districts</b>	<b>2,909,381</b>	<b>5,976,837</b>
<b>HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENTS</b>		
General administrative	1,475,113	2,647,382
Finance and data processing	733,575	1,502,472
Education	152,989	258,635
Service	213,403	401,433
Personnel	35,800	88,977
Legislation	267,248	538,848
Field services	275,563	514,409
Fair practices	298,786	592,633
Public affairs	380,026	666,313
Public policy	175,755	320,270
General counsel	722,069	1,353,530
Membership and organizing	1,238,684	2,504,863
Special organizing	534,578	923,500
Communications	259,535	599,405
Women's affairs	197,271	384,409
Media	151,375	514,819
<b>Total headquarters departments</b>	<b>7,111,770</b>	<b>13,811,898</b>
<b>OTHER</b>		
Death benefit program	35,621	240,139
Strike-Legal Fund expenses—primarily legal fees for legal rights cases	— 5,790	— 9,796
Legislative Action Fund program	58,027	177,234
Legal Representation Fund program	201,128	247,704
Affiliation with AFL-CIO and other organizations	804,342	1,586,945
Costs of National Convention	12,853	16,025
Assistance to councils	198,027	387,920
Contributions, gifts and grants	57,773	192,748
Cost of operating and maintaining the Sims/Sturdivant Building, including interest on mortgage	— 1,149,361	— 2,321,810
District Training Funds	567	73,348
Union Privilege Fund	6,968	29,068
Less: Rent expense charged to District 14 for occupancy of the Sims/Sturdivant Building	— (19,880)	— (39,760)
<b>Total other</b>	<b>2,510,577</b>	<b>5,242,977</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE BY ACTIVITY</b>	<b>\$12,531,728</b>	<b>\$25,031,712</b>

\*These statements have not been audited.

# Rookie President Makes Veteran Moves To **Build Local 933** with **Union Plus**

**A**FGE Local 933 President Ben Mahan faced some challenges when he took his oath of office in January 2006.

He was the new president of a local union in Detroit and the local didn't have enough income to pay its bills. Before he assumed office, Mahan, who has worked at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Detroit for more than 21 years, had service as a steward as his only prior experience in union activism.

Mahan's predicament: the local needed to pay its bills, but if dues increased, he was worried he'd lose members.

The local decided to increase dues but, despite that increase, has 150 more members today than when Mahan took office.

How did Mahan solve this dilemma? The local began a benefits-oriented recruiting drive in the months before the dues increase.

He credits much of this positive—and some might say unexpected—growth to publicizing AFGE's Union Plus benefit programs and a few other benefits the local came up with on its own.

## **A Benefit-Oriented Solution**

Mahan and other leaders produced a booklet on the entire range of benefits and gave one to each employee, along with free food at various gatherings.

He himself knew little about Union Plus, previously seeing "only an occasional flier on an obscure wall. The first thing I realized is that if you do offer benefits, you have to let people know about them."

Local 933 also utilized bright, prominently displayed posters downloaded from the Union Plus website, constant promotion on the local's website and displays in the union office.

"When you can add value to membership and people know that they can get their dues money back in the form of savings on things they need, it makes it much easier to get them to join," Mahan says. "I just knew that taking this approach was the right thing to do."

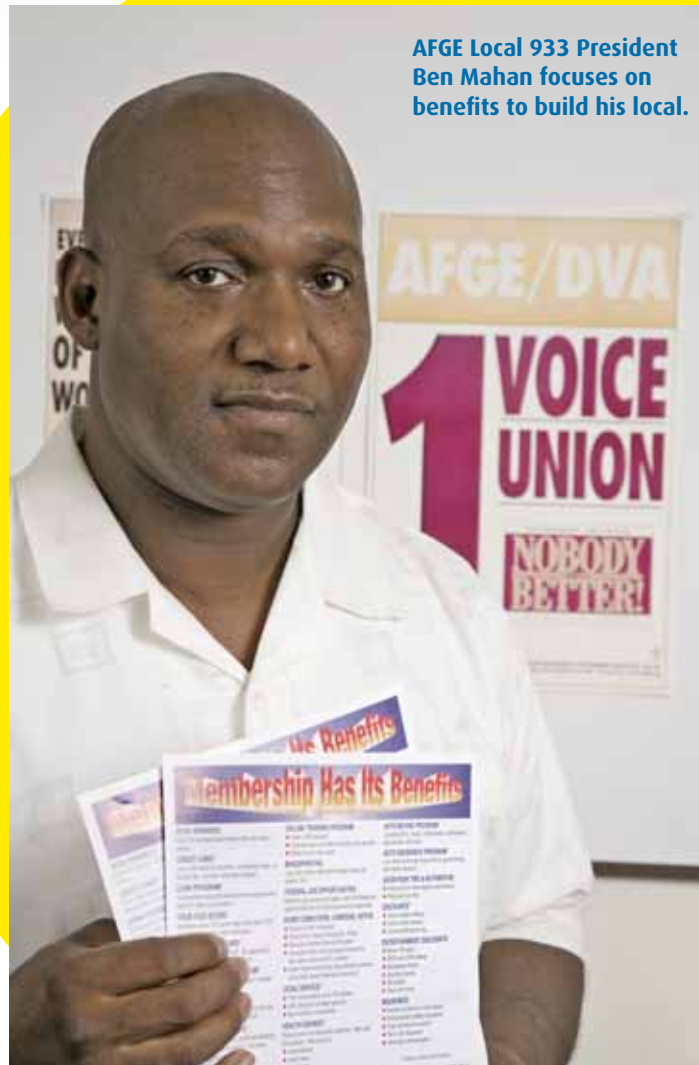
He points out that the local now has fewer people dropping their memberships and even supervisors are flocking to the union.

Best of all, the growth in membership and positive feelings "allow us to do a better job in our core mission of representing our members," he says proudly.

The rate of membership growth has increased over time and Mahan is optimis-

tic that the membership—and the local's strength and effectiveness—will continue to grow as well.

Find out about the AFGE Union Plus benefits and how you can promote them to your members or use them in organizing by logging on to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) or calling 1-888-844-AFGE. Union Plus benefits and services are available to all AFGE members, retirees, and their immediate families. ●



**AFGE Local 933 President Ben Mahan focuses on benefits to build his local.**

**"When you can add value to membership and people know that they can get their dues money back, it makes it much easier to get [people] to join."**

PHOTO BY JIM WEST

## Major Victory in TSA Case

continued from front page

Relations Authority when the agency retaliates due to union activity—a right all other federal employees are afforded. In its place, Congress has not provided an adequate administrative avenue that would pre-empt judicial review, and so the determination regarding the unconstitutionality of TSA's actions is properly before the court.

The U.S. District Court in December 2004 ruled that it had no right to review the case and that AFGE had no standing to sue. The Court of Appeals reversed that decision and remanded the case back to the District Court.

The Court of Appeals in its ruling also stated that “the fact that the TSA has banned collective bargaining does not mean that a union...has no meaningful function; nor does it mean that the TSA has free reign to retaliate against screeners who speak in favor of collective bargaining rights.”

“This ruling sends a powerful message that even without collective bargaining, AFGE still can represent TSOs in disciplinary matters and civil rights cases,” said Gony F. Goldberg, the AFGE attorney who argued the case. “AFGE's fight for TSO bargaining rights only will make our legal efforts that much more effective.” ●

## EDDIE EITCHES

# Carrying AFGE Activism Forward

Eddie Eitches, a third generation union member, is a true champion of union rights. As AFGE Local 476 president, he has achieved great success in his fight to strengthen the bargaining power of the union and to build and secure a lasting partnership between management, the administration and federal workers.

On June 2, Eitches spoke at “The Socialist Market Economy and Other Theoretical Issues,” an international

Congress to keep and enhance beneficial programs despite opposition from the administration, while Chinese unions shy away from this confrontational role, opting instead to rally employees in support of government decisions—even when the government's choice is not in the workers' best interest.”

While pointing out some of the similarities between U.S. and Chinese unions, Eitches found it important to emphasize the disparities and the reason why operations

**“AFGE presses Congress to keep and enhance beneficial programs despite opposition from the administration, while Chinese unions shy away from this confrontational role...”**

conference held in Beijing. In his speech, Eitches highlighted the necessity of organizations such as the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and stressed the importance of having a union that is independent of government rule.

“The union's mission is to further the goals and programs of organizations such as HUD, and to protect the rights of the workers,” Eitches said. “AFGE presses

within the Chinese unions must change.

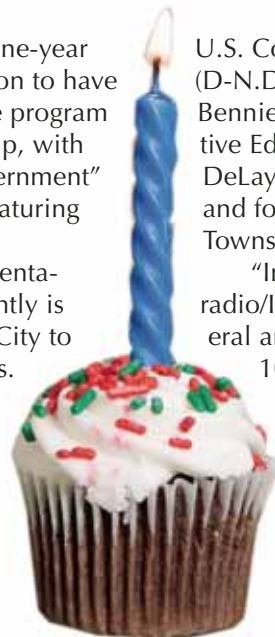
“Prior to 1949, the unions established by the Chinese Communist Party were quite robust and played an active role in the economy,” Eitches said. “With the adoption of the Soviet economics model, unions lost their independence and now the government sets wages, hours and working conditions, and controls housing and medical care.” ●

## Happy Anniversary “INSIDE GOVERNMENT”!

“Inside Government” recently celebrated its one-year anniversary as the only federal workers' union to have a national broadcast program on the air. The program continues to grow in both reputation and listenership, with an audience that now spans the globe. “Inside Government” celebrated its anniversary with a special program featuring AFGE National Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox.

Up next for “Inside Government” is the implementation of its nationwide distribution plan. AFGE currently is working with stations in Macon, Ga. and Salt Lake City to distribute “Inside Government” to those key markets.

Guests in the past year include AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean, “Newsweek” columnist Eleanor Clift, White House Press Corps member Helen Thomas, OPM Director Linda Springer, Congressman Tom Davis (R-Va.),



U.S. Comptroller General David Walker, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), Governor Ted Strickland (D-Ohio), Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), “The Weekly Standard” Executive Editor Fred Barnes, former Texas Congressman Tom DeLay, “USA Today” Washington Bureau Chief Susan Page, and former Maryland Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend.

“Inside Government”, a one-hour weekly nationwide radio/Internet program dedicated to issues that impact all federal and D.C. government employees, can be heard Fridays at 10 a.m. ET nationally on demand (available anytime) at [www.federalnewsradio.com](http://www.federalnewsradio.com) or 1050 AM in the Washington, D.C., area.

The most recently aired program also can be accessed on AFGE's website at [www.afge.org/insidegovernment](http://www.afge.org/insidegovernment). For more information, please e-mail [InsideGovernment@afge.org](mailto:InsideGovernment@afge.org) or go to [www.federalnewsradio.com](http://www.federalnewsradio.com). ●

# Your SAFETY in JEOPARDY as FARM BILL Goes to CONGRESS

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## AFGE Leaders Attend AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Presidential Candidates' Debate In Chicago

National President John Gage, National Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox, and AFGE's national vice presidents recently traveled to Chicago for the AFL-CIO's Executive Council meeting Aug. 5-8. The meeting was highlighted by the AFL-CIO Working Families Presidential Forum held at Soldier Field and moderated by MSNBC's Keith Olbermann.

At the Executive Council meeting, members discussed a number of issues centered around political mobilization, and key legislative and policy priorities. Topics receiving the most attention were health care for all Americans, the nation's trade policy, rebuilding America's infrastructure, the Employee Free Choice Act, and making higher education more accessible for Americans.

Of particular interest is executive pay, which has hit Resurrection Health Care

in Chicago, where CEOs are paid tremendous salaries while patient-support staff struggle just to feed their families. A study released by AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson showed just how unequal pay at Resurrection is.

As for the Working Families Presidential Forum, Democratic Presidential candidates Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Chris Dodd, John Edwards, Dennis Kucinich, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson participated, answering questions from both Olbermann and rank-and-file union members in the audience. The forum gave union members with real issues and concerns an opportunity to engage the candidates.

"This was the best presidential candidates' debate I've ever seen," said Gage. "The issues facing our working families and dedicated union members were front-and-center for the world to see. And

the candidates were able to address these issues and give their ideas on how to resolve them. This was a great day for the Labor Movement." ●

### NOTICE

A constitutional change enacted at the 2006 National Convention now requires that a local have paid all per capita tax due to the National Office by the date 60 days prior to the convening of a district caucus in order for the local to vote at the district caucus.