



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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

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Cut Our Pay? No Way!

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A Message from AFGE's National President *J. David Cox Sr.*

As AFGE members we pride ourselves on being a big tent union – a family of people from all different agencies, professions, races, and faiths. Amidst our many differences, we are all bonded by three core values: unity, empowerment, and progress for all public workers.

Looking bluntly at the external threats before us, it's clear we'll need to work together more closely now than ever. But we also need to be blunt with each other about the internal issues we face as a union family.

Recently, Congress passed and the President signed legislation gutting the rights of our AFGE sisters and brothers at the VA. This terrible policy shortens the time employees have to respond to a long suspension or termination, eliminates administrative judges' ability to lessen penalties, and dramatically lowers the standard of evidence needed to sustain discipline. We fought hard to stop this legislation, but the toxic political environment of our time prevailed in the end.

The legislation itself is a travesty – no question. But our collective response to the legislation from proposal to final passage left much to be desired. From the beginning, some said this only impacted VA employees, and therefore wasn't any of their business. Others said that there are simply too many fires in their own agency to take on the fight in others.

And the results speak for themselves. There should be no question that this same legislation will be coming to your agency in just a matter of time. The camel's nose is under the tent, and there's no stopping him from coming in unless we put up a vigorous, unified front in defense of our fundamental due process rights. The question you may be asking yourself is, given the challenges I discussed earlier, how do we put together a united front?

Just ask the local leaders in El Paso, Texas who, despite working for different agencies, joined together in May to visit their congressman and convince him to change his vote on a critical union rights issue. Ask the leader of a federal prison local who convinced one of the most anti-worker members of Congress to switch his vote

to oppose a bill gutting official time at the VA. Ask the Social Security Administration leadership across the country implementing a plan to contact over 700 SSA offices this year to talk about attacks on our jobs, our rights, and the public services we deliver.

The answers, brothers and sisters, are all around us: solidarity and strength. It's the idea that an injury to one is an injury to all. We need to have each other's backs, even when it's inconvenient; even when it hurts. Apart we are prey – together we are a pack. But a pack is only as strong as its weakest member. Unless all 300,000+ members are taking action, we are doomed to fail.

The lesson is, whether it's our turn in the arena today or not, WE ALL HAVE TO BE IN THE FIGHT! United we bargain, divided we beg.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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What's the Deal with Official Time?



It's called 'official time' instead of 'union time' for a good reason. It helps bring federal workers and managers together to build a better, more accountable government for the public.

Creating Safe Working Conditions



TRUE FALSE

Employee representatives and managers use official time to identify health and safety hazards in the workplace. When the workplace is safe, everyone can focus their time on the public good.

Fighting Discrimination on the Job



TRUE FALSE

Union representatives use it to defend employees who have been discriminated against or face retaliation for blowing the whistle on mismanagement.

Quickly Resolving Workplace Problems



TRUE FALSE

Union representatives meet with managers on official time to resolve workplace problems before they escalate into costly litigation. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

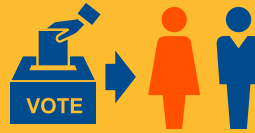
Improving Key Public Services



TRUE FALSE

Employee representatives use official time to work with agency leadership on initiatives to improve public service delivery and employee morale.

Electing Union Officers



TRUE FALSE

Union elections are private affairs, and therefore can't be done on official time. Employees elect representatives on their own time and dime.

Recruiting More Union Members



TRUE FALSE

Recruiting more union members on official time is strictly prohibited. Members join during their breaks and off-duty hours so their work time can be spent serving the public.

Participating in Partisan Political Activities



TRUE FALSE

Union members are prohibited to participate in political activities on official time. Any political activity must be done on their own time and dime.

Call 1-855-976-5397 and tell your lawmaker to oppose H.R. 1461 and protect our union rights.

Federal Pay and Retirement in the Crosshairs



Now we know why President Trump was willing to propose a 1.9 percent pay raise for federal employees next year – because it’s money you’ll never actually see.

Instead of a well-deserved pay raise, President Trump’s budget proposes to slash your paycheck by thousands of dollars a year and cut the benefits you were promised for retirement.

The retirement cuts alone total about \$149 billion over a decade, which would be on top of \$182 billion in cuts to your pay and benefits since 2010.

“Thanks to years of pay freezes, meager wage hikes, and mandatory increases in retirement, federal employees earn 6.5 percent less today than they did at the start of the decade when adjusted for inflation,” Cox said. “President Trump’s budget kicks this race to the bottom into overdrive.”

Specifically, the budget would:

- Increase current workers’ out-of-pocket payments toward their pensions from the 0.8 percent most workers pay today to 7 percent over the course of six years. That’s nearly an eight-fold increase – not including payments you already make into the Thrift Savings Plan and Social Security.
- Reduce pension benefits for future retirees by averaging your highest five years of salary, instead of the highest three years.

- Eliminate annual cost-of-living adjustments for current and future retirees under the Federal Employees Retirement System, and cut the COLA for retirees under the older Civil Service Retirement System by 0.5 percent from the current formula.
- Eliminate supplemental annuity payments to employees who retire before age 62, such as law enforcement agents, firefighters, and workers who take early outs or buyouts.

Here’s how it hits your bottom line:

Suppose you currently earn \$50,000 a year, are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), and were hired before 2013. You would go from paying \$400 a year toward your pension to \$3,500 a year – an increase of 775 percent. That’s thousands of dollars out of your pocket each year, without anything to show for it.

Now let’s look at your pension. Under the current formula, an employee who earns \$55,000 in year



John Smith is a law enforcement officer and makes \$50,000 a year

John’s yearly income will drop \$8,000 a year after mandatory retirement at 57 due to the loss of the FERS supplement.

one, \$57,000 in year two, and \$59,000 in year three before retirement would have a high-three salary of \$57,000. If you retired at age 62 with 20 years of service, your annual annuity would be \$12,540.

By switching to a high-five formula, your average would be dragged down by two additional years of salary. If we add one year at \$51,000 and another at \$53,000 to the example above, your high-five salary would drop from \$57,000 to \$55,000. That would cut your annual annuity to \$12,100 – a drop of 3.5 percent. Over 20 years, that would add up to nearly \$9,000 in lost income.

And it gets worse. By scrapping cost-of-living adjustments, your annuity would remain frozen in time – even as the cost for groceries, medicine, and everyday essentials continues to rise. Assuming 2 percent annual inflation, your annuity would lose almost half of its value in just 20 years – amounting to thousands more in lost income each year.

Law enforcement officers, firefighters, and anyone else who retires before age 62 would take another hit with the elimination of the special retirement supplement, which helps bridge the gap for employees who retire before becoming eligible for Social Security. If this supplement were eliminated, an employee with 20 years of service would lose \$670 a month based on an average monthly Social Security payment of \$1,341.

More hits to your job and benefits

President Trump's budget does more than cut your pay and retirement benefits. For many workers, your job could be on the line.

The budget calls for eliminating more than 27,500 federal jobs next year alone. The hardest hit agency is the Environmental Protection Agency, where nearly one-fourth of jobs are slated for elimination.

The budget also proposes to eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which pays off student loans for workers who enter public service.

“Federal employees do a tremendous job serving the public with limited resources and little appreciation,”

How Much Will Trump's Budget Cost You?



You'll pay more

The amount you pay toward your pension each paycheck will increase.

BEFORE **\$15.38**

AFTER **\$130.77**

But get less

The value of your retirement annuity will shrink by changing the formula for computing your pension.

BEFORE **\$16,832.20**

AFTER **\$16,502.64**

Your pension will shrink each year due to loss of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA).

2027 Value BEFORE **\$21,546**

2027 Value AFTER **\$16,832**

*Based on a \$50K annual salary

Cox said. “Cutting the pay, benefits, and jobs of our nation's civil servants is taking this country in the wrong direction.”

Losers

under the Trump Budget



FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

- The budget proposes cutting \$149 billion from federal employees and retirees.
- It increases current workers' out of pocket payments toward their pensions by 6%.
- It eliminates COLA for FERS employees/retirees and cuts by 0.5% the COLA adjustments for CSRS employees/retirees.
- It eliminates the FERS annuity supplement for employees, mostly law enforcement, who retire before Social Security eligibility.



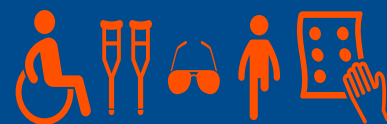
SENIORS

- The budget cuts \$1.4 trillion from Medicaid, which funds seniors' nursing home or assisted living.
- It eliminates funding for Meals on Wheels.
- It cuts job training/job placement programs for low-income seniors.



LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

- It slashes funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by at least 20%.
- The budget cuts \$200 billion from food stamps, slashing the number of people who rely on the program, which covers 44 million people.
- It proposes big cuts to Medicaid, which provides health insurance to poor children and adults.
- It cuts funding for affordable housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget would be cut by \$6.2 billion.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- The budget cuts \$70 billion from Social Security disability payments.
- It cuts funding for affordable housing for people with disabilities by 20%.

Winners

under the Trump Budget



BIG DEFENSE CONTRACTORS

- The Defense Department would receive a budget increase of \$54 billion, a large chunk of which would go to big defense contractors.



POLLUTERS

- It cuts the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) budget by \$2.6 billion or 31%, eliminating 50 EPA programs to protect clean air, water, land and thousands of EPA jobs.



CORPORATIONS

- The budget cuts the corporate tax rate, saving billions for companies already raking in record profits.



THE WEALTHY

- The budget gives billions in tax breaks to the wealthy by abolishing the estate tax and repealing investment taxes that help fund Obamacare.



PRIVATE PRISONS INDUSTRY

- The budget increases funding for private prisons by \$171 million.

When we stay silent, we lose.
Call (844) 669-5146 and tell your lawmaker:
Hands off my paycheck!

Trump Budget Cuts Veterans' Disability Benefits to Pay for VA Privatization



AFGE members come out in full force for the Keeping the Promise Rally in Milwaukee.

Veterans groups are blasting the Trump administration for proposing to cut veterans benefits and use the savings to pay for privatizing more veterans' care.

Trump recently signed into law a bill that extends the VA's controversial choice program that sends veterans to for-profit private hospitals instead of their local VA. Under the new proposal, veterans who cannot work because of their disabilities could see their benefits slashed by nearly two-thirds.

"The administration's budget for the VA would effectively lower the earnings of our most vulnerable veterans by reducing or eliminating disability payments from veterans who are the most in need," American Legion National Commander Charles Schmidt said in a statement. "This is absolutely unacceptable to us."

American Legion and other veterans' groups are against expanding the choice privatization program at the expense of VA patients, but this is exactly what the Trump administration is doing.

"It is a 'stealth' privatization attempt, which the

American Legion fully opposes," American Legion National Commander Charles Schmidt said in a statement. "Choice should not be advanced to the detriment of cost-of-living increases for veterans."

AFGE has been saying all along that the choice program would take vital resources from veterans who want to get their care at the VA. Expanding of the program could lead to wholesale privatization of the largest and most important medical system

in our country.

'I will be destroyed'

"If they cut VA at all, my family and I will be destroyed," said an Army veteran and an AFGE member who had to retire because of his Crohn's disease after 30 years in public service.

The Army veteran questioned why federal employees and veterans are being attacked even though they "have served the country with honor, courage, sacrifice – things that a lot of them have never done."

All veterans deserve world-class health care and medical treatment for their sacrifice, and the VA is the only system that can offer all of that and more to our veterans. It is not just another hospital system, but a community of veterans that brings together generations of servicemen and women from all wars, with all injuries, and all walks of life.

"AFGE will continue to stand with veterans' service organizations like the American Legion and defend veterans from greedy privatizers looking to profit off of their war wounds," Cox added.

AFGE Welcomes Three New National Vice Presidents

A FGE welcomes Phil Glover, Dan Doyle, and Gregg James as new National Vice Presidents for District 3, 4, and 8 respectively. They were elected in May replacing retired NVPs Keith Hill, Joe Flynn, and Jane Nygaard. The new NVPs have decades of experience to draw from to make our union Big Enough to Win.

Meet the New National Vice Presidents



Phil Glover

Phil Glover, an Army veteran, has served AFGE for more than 25 years. His leadership in AFGE started in 1991 when he became vice president of Local 3951 in the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Between 1991 and 2014, he served as local president, Council of Prison Locals regional vice president, council president, council national legislative coordinator, and regional vice president (for the second time). He retired from BOP in 2014 before joining the national office as a National Organizer assigned to District 3, where he remained until his election to NVP.



Dan Doyle

Danny Doyle's unionism began 27 years ago when he took a job as a federal contract specialist at the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) in Morgantown, West Virginia. He decided to join AFGE when he saw a union activist fighting for employees that were wrongfully denied their bonuses. Rising in the ranks over the years, Doyle has served many important roles within AFGE and the broader labor movement, most recently as vice president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO.



Gregg James

Gregg James grew up living through strikes and picket lines. His grandfather was a union organizer for the AFL before the AFL and CIO came together. Following 23 years of service in the U.S. Air Force, James joined the Defense Contract Management Agency, where he joined AFGE and became president of AFGE Local 2118 in Utah in 2003 and later Local 2265 in Minneapolis in 2012. After that, he became DCMA Council 170's West Vice President and Executive Vice President. He was elected president of the council in 2015.

Americans Come Out to Say "Thank You" to EPA Employees



Genevieve Howe and Jodie Shapiro stood in front of the EPA headquarters in Washington, the morning of May 12, a postcard and pen in hand. They were writing a thank you note for EPA employees, who are being targeted for massive budget and staff cuts by the Trump administration.

"Dear EPA – Thank you for nearly five decades of service to clean up and protect our air, water, and

land. We cannot live without your work and without strong environmental regulations," Howe wrote.

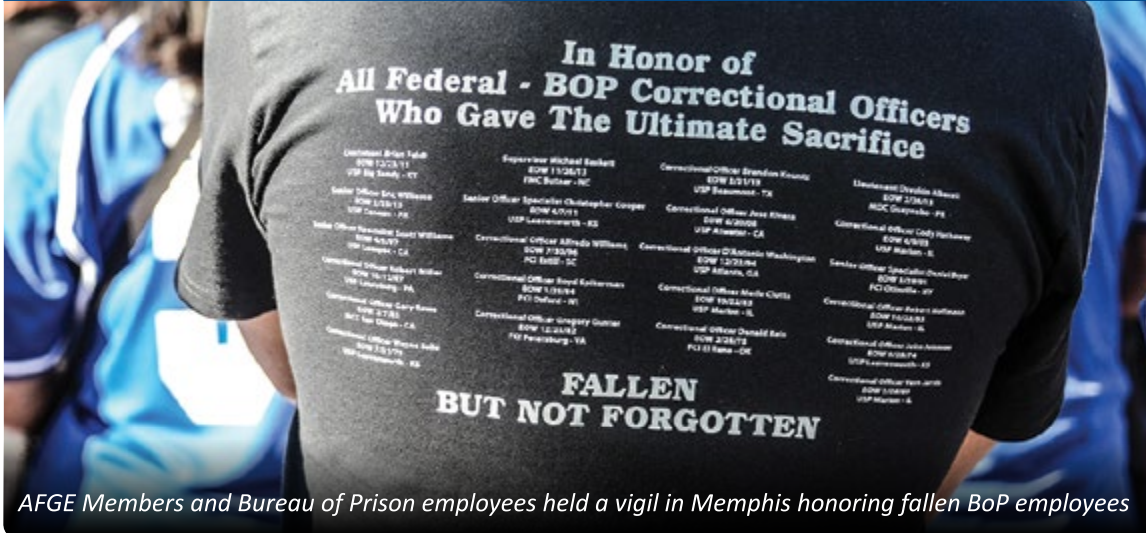
To Howe, this was personal. Her father, Sydney Howe – president of the Conservation Foundation – helped start Earth Day back in 1970 along with Senator Gaylord Nelson and Denise Hayes. On that first Earth Day, 20 million people across the country marched to demand a clean environment.

Today, however, the administration has proposed to cut EPA's budget by 31%, or \$2.6 billion. The EPA's workforce would be cut by 25%, or 3,829 employees. More than 50 environmental protection programs would be closed and funding for hazardous waste site cleanup would be reduced by 30%.

The D.C. event was one of many held across the country the week of May 8th.

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AFGE Council of Prison Locals Notches Two Big Wins for Correctional Workers' Safety



AFGE Members and Bureau of Prison employees held a vigil in Memphis honoring fallen BoP employees

in sentencing.

“Too often, inmates already serving life sentences attack correctional officers knowing they cannot receive a harsher sentence,” Young said. “This unfortunately happened with correctional officers Jose Rivera and Eric Williams. The passage of the Thin Blue Line Act gives correctional officers a sense

After years of advocacy by the Council of Prison Locals, the Bureau of Prisons announced they will now provide gun lockers at the workplace for correctional staff. This is critical to their self-defense as staff are often targeted by inmates’ associates outside the prison walls, as was the case for slain correctional officer Osvaldo Albarati.

of security, knowing that there is now a powerful deterrent to targeting them on the job.”

Though serious progress is being made, correctional officers still need your help to make both victories the law of the land.

In addition to the winning the years-long struggle for gun lockers, officer safety secured another victory with House passage of the Thin Blue Line Act of 2017, a bill that makes the murder of a correctional officer or other first responder an aggravating factor

 **Call Congress at 202-224-3121**
and tell them to support the Osvaldo Albarati Officer Protection Act and Thin Blue Line Act.

AFGE Activists Save 3,000 Army Financial Services Jobs

Four years ago, the Army came up with an idea that it should do its own accounting work and pull out of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). To accomplish this, the Army planned to use active military personnel to do the work at Army installations around the world.

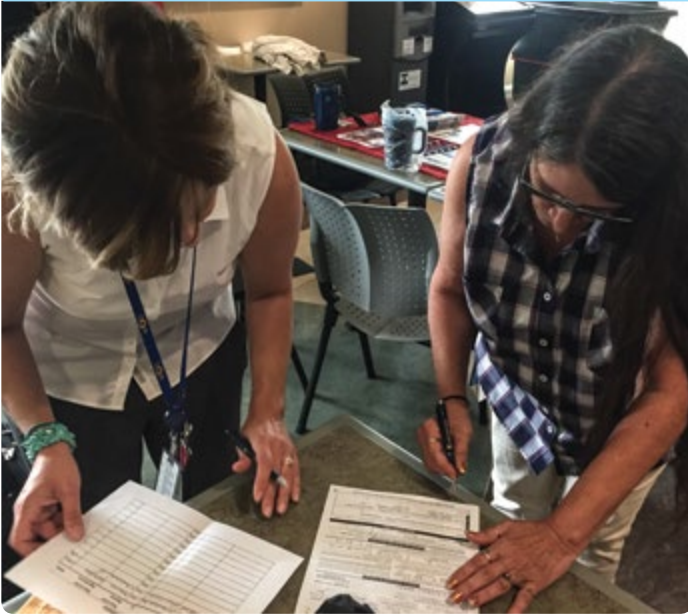
had already been doing efficiently; the Army was misspending taxpayers’ dollars as military personnel are substantially more expensive than civilians; active military personnel should be focusing on protecting the country, not processing payroll; and the Army was killing 3,000 jobs at DFAS.



After the Army made its plan public, the AFGE DFAS Council immediately pointed out several serious shortfalls: the Army had to create an entirely new system to duplicate what DFAS

Due to intense opposition from AFGE, the Army scaled down its plan from a full-blown operation to a pilot project, which started in 2014. Three years later, our efforts paid off. The Army early this summer announced it was ending the pilot project after finding that it could not provide the services with the same efficiency and effectiveness of DFAS.

More and More Government Workers Are Joining AFGE



everywhere. Now, new members are coming on board by the thousands.

Two new groups of employees recently voted to join AFGE this spring.

At the Department of Veterans Affairs, a group of more than 1,500 employees at the Veterans Health Administration Member Services voted to be represented by AFGE. At the Department of Energy, more than 130 employees at the Golden Field Office in Colorado voted to join AFGE.

“DOE headquarters has union representation that protects the rights of the headquarters personnel, said Energy Project Specialist Sharon Gill. “In Golden, we also need a union to protect us when dealing with management in the equality of work, fairness in performance evaluations and ratings, job security, job stability, fairness, and employee situations.”

Our collective voice is growing so quickly, that at the end of May, AFGE’s membership reached another all-time high of 313,064 dues-paying members.

It’s tough being a public servant these days. With the constant threat of a government shutdown, cuts to pay and retirement, attacks on your voice at work and the work you do, government employees aren’t getting the respect you deserve.

AFGE’s mission is to celebrate all public service and win a better future for government workers

AFGE Resolves to Elevate Voices on Civil, Human, and Women’s Rights

The AFL-CIO has recently gone through a restructuring that has resulted in the Civil, Human and Women’s Rights Department being cut and merged within the campaign and mobilization section of the organization.

AFGE and other unions expressed concern that the program’s dedication to women, people of color, the LGBT community, and young people may get overshadowed by the overall agenda of the labor movement. The Women’s and Fair Practices Departments believe this restructuring could disproportionately affect the most marginalized of our union members.

At the June AFGE National Executive Council meeting, NVP for Women and Fair Practices Augusta Y. Thomas presented a resolution on the matter that was approved unanimously.

The resolution urges the AFL-CIO to include the operations and functions of the Civil, Human, and Women’s Rights Department as a principal section of any redesigned organizational structure. It also provides that AFL-CIO constituency groups like the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance be assigned roles in designing federation programming amidst the reorganization.

Lastly the resolution calls for a place at the table in all decision-making forums which affect community outreach.



AFGE Women’s & Fair Practices Departments



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO**

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