



# 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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## Where Do We Go From Here? After AFGE's 2018 LegCon, Priorities Emerge

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

**S**isters and Brothers,  
In February, 1,000 AFGE members and leaders took to the halls of Congress to fight for your pay, benefits, and due process during our 2018 Legislative and Mobilization Conference. These days of action coincided with the release of President Trump's 2019 budget — one of the worst we've seen in AFGE's over eighty years.

The budget aims to cut, cut, cut — all while the administration is dead set on making it easier to fire hard-working government employees for nearly no reason at all. Or worse, to fire federal employees because you keep doing your jobs regardless of petty Washington politics. Our federal employees are what make our country great. The oath you take to uphold and defend the Constitution is the core of our work and our values as public servants.

***Any attempt to politicize your work or reduce our civil workforce due to political motivations cuts at the very basis of our country- the Constitution.***

It is critical the momentum we gained after this year's Legislative and Mobilization Conference be maintained at home. This means calling your members of Congress weekly. Reminding Congress of the important work you do, asking them to fund your office and your agency are all critical to our success. I encourage every member to work toward being on a first name basis with the district office staff in all your members of Congress' offices.

Why? We have to put a face on the federal workforce. Too long have politicians been selling America misinformation about our government's employees. Too long have politicians told America that cuts to the federal government balance the budget. Too long have politicians pitted "us" against "them". It's hogwash.

Sisters and brothers, we can't stay silent any longer. Cutting the cycle of "us" vs. "them" will take every member engaging in their communities about what's going on and how your ability to provide critical services to this country we all love is being jeopardized.

As public servants, we go to work every day energized

that we serve our communities and our country. Let's remind everyone who will listen of the great work we do. And I challenge everyone willing to go further, there are many apolitical offices to run for — county supervisor seats, school boards, city councils. We have to shape the policy that supports workers' rights and that starts at the ground level.

Are your churches and places of worship talking about the importance of saving good paying jobs in your community?

***If you're a veteran, are you active in your local VSOs? Do they know that your VA is under attack? Do they know that over 50% of the federal workforce are veterans?***

To win this fight we need every partner we can get and that starts with you.

In Solidarity,

### **AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD**

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## The Economy Is Booming, So Why Is Your Pay On The Chopping Block?

**W**hen the nation's economy went into freefall a decade ago, lawmakers told you and every other federal worker that you needed to sacrifice your wages and benefits to help reduce our deficit.

Now that the economy is on the upswing, with the stock market hitting record highs and companies like Walmart raising minimum wages for its workers, it's only fair that those who personally sacrificed the most share at least a little of the prosperity.

Yet that's not how the administration sees it. They want to freeze your pay in 2019.

If your pay is frozen next year, you and all federal workers will have given up \$246 billion in pay and benefits over 10 years – up from \$182 billion and counting today.

***Federal employees are earning nearly 5 percent less today than they did at the start of the decade, when adjusted for inflation.***

It's wrong for so many of our hard-working members to be struggling to pay their bills, especially when the richest Americans and corporations are enjoying massive tax cuts.

AFGE strongly supports legislation introduced in the House and Senate that would provide all federal employees with a 3 percent pay adjustment in 2019. The Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act, or FAIR Act, was introduced in the Senate by Brian

Schatz of Hawaii (S 2295) and in the House by Gerry Connolly of Virginia (HR 4775). Each and every day, public-sector workers are on the front lines helping deliver government programs and services that the American people pay for.

It's vital for the government to pay its employees fairly so we can recruit and retain the high-caliber workforce that the public expects and deserves. A 3 percent pay adjustment is a modest investment in the women and men who guard our borders, serve our veterans, inspect our food, and protect our planet.

## Since 2011 Congress has taken \$246 billion from federal employees

Action	Cost to Federal Workers
3-year pay freeze (2011, 2012, 2013)	\$98 billion
2012 UI extension increased retirement contributions for 2013 hires to 3.1%	\$15 billion
2013 lost salaries of 750,000 employees furloughed because of sequestration	\$1 billion
2013 Murray-Ryan increased retirement contributions for post-2013 hires to 4.4%	\$6 billion
2014 pay raise of only 1%	\$18 billion
2015 pay raise of only 1%	\$21 billion
2016 pay raise of only 1.3%	\$23 billion
2018 pay raise of only 1.9%	\$13 billion
2019 proposed pay freeze	\$51 billion

Total ..... **\$246 billion**

# Fired Up: AFGE's 2018



An AFGE member attends the Our Rights, Our Fight Rally on Capitol Hill

Nearly 1,000 AFGE members gathered in Washington, D.C. in February to stand against anti-worker politicians who are attacking our democracy, our government, and its workforce.

The recent massive tax cuts for the wealthy, two government shutdowns in less than a month, and the White House's 2019 budget proposal that freezes federal employees' pay and cuts our health care and retirement are just some of the issues that got AFGE members fired up at AFGE's annual legislative conference.

During the rally we were reminded that the survival of our union and our government is at stake. AFGE members were urged to stand our ground and "Never, never, never, never give up!"

## AFGE Members Rally at LegCon 2018

To shine a spotlight on the attacks on taxpayer services, AFGE held two rallies this year – the Save the VA rally and the Our Rights, Our Fight rally. At the Save the VA rally, AFGE members from various agencies joined their VA brothers and sisters to denounce the administration's failure to fill 49,000 vacancies at VA hospitals and clinics nationwide. They gathered again at Upper Senate Park the following day to denounce cuts to pay, health care, and retirement.

Several members of Congress attended the conference and rallies, including House and Senate Minority leaders **Nancy Pelosi** and **Chuck Schumer**, **Sen. Bernie Sanders** of Vermont, and **Sen. Tim Kaine** of Virginia.

At the plenary session, **Rep. Jamie Raskin** of Maryland gave a rousing speech, declaring "The government is us. An attack on federal employees is an attack on democracy itself."

**Rep. Val Demings** of Florida, who was Orlando's first female police chief, got the crowd on its feet when she told them she joined the union on her first day at the Orlando Police Department. "I wanted to be a part of something that's bigger than me," she quipped.

To show solidarity with AFGE members, our brothers and sisters from other labor unions joined us at the legislative conference and both rallies. Among those in attendance were leaders and members of AFSCME, CWA, AFL-CIO, APWU, NFFE, Working America, AFT, IATSE, IFPTE, National Postal Mail Handlers, LiUNA, NALC, UAW, Unite Here, and NYC Central Labor Council.

CWA President Christopher Shelton electrified the crowd when he said "Trump needs to freeze his hands, not wages," referring to the President's proposed pay freeze for federal employees next year.

# LegCon & Legislative Priorities

## Legislative Priorities

Between rallies, workshops, and District and Council meetings, AFGE members also stormed the marble halls of Congress to tell their side of the story and educate elected officials on what they do every single day protecting and serving the American people.

Here's a recap of the issues we're focusing on this year:

### Pay

AFGE objects to pay freezes or cuts for federal and D.C. government employees. We object to replacing the GS system with a tried-and-failed "pay for performance" system that reallocates payroll away from rank-and-file employees to managers and supervisors or those working at or closer to agency headquarters.

We urge Congress to do the right thing and give federal employees a 3 percent pay raise in 2019.

### Retirement

We oppose the elimination of the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) defined benefit. We urge Congress to repeal cuts to retirement for those hired after 2013.

### Health Insurance

We oppose any measure that raises premiums for health insurance or converts the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) into a voucher program.

### Civil Service Protection

The merit-based civil service is a core of our democracy, and federal employees take an oath of office to uphold our constitution. Politicians must not be allowed to turn the civil service into a spoils

system and punish those whom they don't like. The firing of FBI Director James Comey is a good example of an abuse of power by the executive branch. That's why we object to legislation that would make it easy for these politicians to fire federal employees for any or no reason. We object to bills that would allow politicians to punish union volunteers by taking away their earned pensions, bonuses, and workplace rights.

### Union Representation

Our constitution protects freedom of association. We oppose any attempt to weaken unions and federal employees' right to join together in union. In the federal government, joining a union is voluntary, yet federal unions have a legal obligation to represent all members of a bargaining unit. That's why we oppose any restriction on agencies' ability to negotiate for a reasonable amount of time (official time) for employees who volunteer as union reps to represent their coworkers.

AFGE urges Congress to reject any efforts to weaken or get rid of official time. We also object to any measure to restrict voluntary payroll dues deduction because employees have the right to join a union and have their dues deducted from their paychecks.



*Members attend AFGE's 2018 legislative conference*

***Missed the  
Legislative Conference?***

**Read the 16 Moments you missed at AFGE's  
2018 Legislative Conference on [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).**



# Trump's Hit List

President Trump unleashed a venomous assault on the federal workers who protect and serve our country in his fiscal 2019 budget proposal. Here's a rundown of what would happen under the Trump plan:

## Your Pay

- Freezes your pay for 2019
- Ends within-grade increases
- Ties future raises to subjective pay-for-performance scheme

## Your Retirement

- Cuts your pension by moving from High-3 to High-5 calculation
- Increases your pension contribution to 7 percent of salary
- Ends cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for current and future FERS retirees and cuts COLA by 0.5% annually for CSRS retirees
- Lowers your Thrift Savings Plan earnings by reducing value of G Fund
- Eliminates supplement for law enforcement officers and others who retire early

## Health Care

- Urges replacing current federal insurance program with vouchers that would shift more costs onto enrollees
- Proposes limiting options for enrollees by ending requirement to offer nationwide indemnity plans that allow visits to any doctor or hospital

## Leave

- Cuts the number of days of paid leave for all federal employees
- Ends ability to convert unused sick leave into service hours toward retirement

## Job-related injuries, job-related death benefits

- Reduces workers' compensation benefits for those injured or killed on the job

## Due process

- Pushes to eliminate due process rights for all federal workers by extending the VA Accountability Act to every federal agency

Learn what you can do to fight these proposed cuts by visiting [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

## Quotes to Remember from AFGE's 2018 LegCon



Rep. Keith Ellison of Minnesota speaking at the Feb. 14 rally:

*"I want to thank you for making sure we can drink the water and breathe the air. I want to thank you for being an everyday hero, making sure this government works for everybody. You will not be alone. You have our support. We have your back."*



House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California, speaking at the Feb. 14 rally:

*"No matter the weather, rain or shine, you have been there for the American people. And that's the fight we're in."*



Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont speaking at the Feb. 13 rally for VA workers:

*"Our job is not to allow Trump and his friends to privatize VA. It's to strengthen VA."*

## Retired Americans Condemn Republicans' Plan to Destroy Social Security

Senator Bernie Sanders said it best when he told the crowd gathering at the Dirksen Senate Office building on Jan. 18 that the Republicans' plan to cut the Social Security Administration's (SSA) budget by nearly half a billion "is not cost saving. It's an effort to destroy Social Security."

The average Social Security check is not a lot by any means – only about \$1,300 a month – but nearly two thirds of all American seniors depend on it for most of their income. How heartless one can be to take away this crucial blanket of security that keeps 22 million retirees, people with disabilities, and children out of poverty.

Since 2011, baby boomers are retiring at a rate of nearly 10,000 per day, which has dramatically increased the number of constituents served by the agency. And despite the growing population of Americans relying on Social Security, funding levels have remained stagnant. At the same time, Social

Security has already closed 64 field offices.

AFGE joined Sens. Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Bob Casey in delivering a petition signed by 250,000 American taxpayers opposing these cuts to SSA. We were also joined by the Alliance for Retired Americans, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, and numerous advocates and seniors.

AFGE Council of SSA Field Operations Locals Executive Vice President Dana Duggins said Congress has created this unnecessary hardship on those who rely on Social Security as the budget process is flawed.

"Under the Social Security Act, Congress has the authority to appropriate all the resources necessary, from the SSA trust fund to run the Social Security programs," she said. "We believe the time is now to take the politics out of funding of SSA."

### Four Ways You Can Take Action NOW

With Congress continuing its attacks on our jobs, pay, and union rights, it's more important than ever that we take action. Here are 4 easy ways to stand up and fight for government workers.



#### Update your information online

In the event of a government shutdown, we'll need to stay in touch to take action. Go to [www.afge.org/update](http://www.afge.org/update) and make sure we have your current email address.



#### Follow AFGE on social media

By following AFGE on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, you can stay in the loop on how we're standing up for workers—and find new opportunities



to take action in your area.

#### Put Congress on speed dial

Save the Congressional switchboard phone number in your phone, so you can easily call your lawmaker about protecting our pay, retirement, and healthcare. Enter it now: **202-224-3121.**



#### Make sure you're registered to vote

As working people, it's important we choose lawmakers who will create a future that works for all of us. And the only way we can do that is by voting. Make sure your voter registration is current or register to vote at [rockthevote.org/register-to-vote](http://rockthevote.org/register-to-vote).

**IMPORTANT:** This information should not be downloaded using government equipment; read during duty time or sent to others using government equipment; because it suggests action to be taken in support or against legislation. Do not use your government email address or government phone in contacting your Member of Congress.

## AFGE Participates in National "I AM" Moment of Silence



remarks from AFGE leaders, reflection of the sanitation workers strike, and Moment of Silence observation.

The National Moment of Silence is part of AFSCME's I AM 2018 initiative that draws inspiration from the heroes of Memphis

**A**fter two sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death on the job on February 1, 1968, 1,300 members of AFSCME stood together and went on strike to demand dignity and respect. They marched in the streets carrying signs with four powerful words: "I AM A MAN."

Fifty years later, on the anniversary of the accident, over 100 cities across the country recognized this day with their union brothers and sisters, local elected officials, sanitation workers, as well as community and faith-based leaders with events hosted at city halls and public works yards. OPEIU Local 2 and AFGE joined with others to commemorate the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike and to honor the life of Echol Cole and Robert Walker.

The "I AM" Moment of Silence program began with a welcome. The program was followed by

and connecting their struggle to today's challenges. After the sanitation workers went on strike, Dr. King traveled to Memphis to join the strikers, future members of AFSCME Local 1733. He delivered his famous "Mountaintop" speech on April 3 at the historic Mason Temple, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) International Headquarters. Less than 24 hours later, he was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. The I AM 2018 initiative marks the 50th anniversary of this watershed moment.

AFSCME, COGIC, and civil and workers' rights leaders will gather in Memphis on April 2-4 for a series of events honoring Dr. King's legacy and the courage of the sanitation workers. AFGE leaders and members will be there to show our support and help move our civil and labor rights movement forward.

The April 2-4, 2018 events are open to everyone. For more information, visit [www.afge.org/iam2018](http://www.afge.org/iam2018)

## 2018 AFGE National Convention

In accordance with the AFGE National Constitution, you are hereby notified that the 41st Triennial Convention will be held on Monday, August 13 through Friday, August 17, 2018 at:

**Paris-Bally's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino**  
3645 S Las Vegas Boulevard  
Las Vegas, NV 89109

There will be NO on-site registration (advance registration only), and all registration must be postmarked by July 14, 2018.

All delegates must be elected by July 14, 2018. Check your mail for complete 2018 Convention details and information. We will follow up with more information.



## How One Local Doubled Membership in a Few Months

Joseph Fulks didn't set out to become president of an AFGE local at Washington-Dulles International Airport. He was happy being its vice president handling grievances on issues like Absent Without Leave (AWOL), Family and Medical Leave Act, and reprimands. His coworkers knew he was the go-to guy for these important issues that affect their career and families. Managers knew him, liked him, and worked well with him.



President of Local 445 Joseph Fulks

But when the then-president of Local 445 stepped down and left TSA in June last year, Fulks was thrust into the position and all the responsibilities that came with it. For the first time, he had to learn how to run the entire local, which represents TSA officers in one of the busiest airports in the country.

Fulks had a vision for his local, but he quickly realized the local was not equipped to grow under

the current structure. Their bank account was low, for example. The bylaws that govern the local were outdated. They had no stewards. Out of about 600 TSA employees at the airport, the local had 151 members. "I realized I needed to increase membership," Fulks told AFGE.

To put his plan in motion, he reached out to AFGE District 4, which quickly put together a team of staff from the district and national office. Together, they developed an organizing plan for the rest of the year and beyond. Their goal? Double membership by spring 2018. But by the first week of December – only six months in – they were already there. Three hundred and seven TSA officers were now members of Local 445.

"The main thing that got the workforce excited is that I spent years representing employees. I followed through on stuff and handled hundreds of cases. So when the workforce heard I took over, they already had a sense of trust," he explained.

"I try to include them as much as possible because these things are all boiled down to people and relationships," he said. "The FSD thanked me personally for increasing professionalism for our local here and for the ability to work with management."

Things that may seem trivial like scheduling meetings and not cancelling them, having an agenda and sending it in advance, and being responsible with everyone's time actually make the local look more professional.

"My goal is to create a better work environment for our workforce, be more responsive to our workforce, and continue a good relationship with management," he added.



**Stay in the Loop with AFGE**  
Go to [www.afge.org/update](http://www.afge.org/update)  
and update your contact information today.

## Why We Launched "Love Letters to EPA"



As EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt continues to unravel years of great work by the men and women at the Environmental Protection Agency – while charging untold sums of travel to the American taxpayer – and President Trump continues proposals to slash the budget at the agency, one AFGE local decided to ask the American public: Why do you love the EPA?

“Last year while our agency was under extreme fire from the administration, we noticed that the citizens of this country were stepping up and speaking out about the work we do,” said AFGE Local 3911 President Antony Tseng. “We know the importance of keeping our air and water clean and safe for consumption, but we wanted to hear why the American people thought so too, and so ‘Love Letters to EPA’ was born.”

Love Letters to EPA was launched last July, and called for videographers of all ages to submit videos up to 2 minutes in length about why they loved the EPA, and did not want to see it dismantled. In the months that followed, more than 50 filmmakers of all ages, backgrounds, and locations took the time to create inspiring and exciting videos about their love for the great outdoors, and for the only agency charged with keeping it clean and safe for generations to come.

There were drone videos, stop motion animation videos, testimonials, cartoons, and so many different approaches to telling the story about why people love the EPA and didn’t want to see it dismantled.

“The outpouring of support was amazing. We saw such great videos that used all kinds of creative approaches to tell us why they want and need the EPA, and it really has helped boost morale,” Tseng said. “It was truly awe inspiring to sit down with our local and watch the videos that people had taken so much time and energy to create,” he said.

Of the more than 50 videos submitted, there were seven winners selected for prizes ranging from \$500 - \$5,000, with the grand prize winner announced on Valentines Day 2018. You can see all the winners and honorable mentions at [www.afge.org/ll2epa](http://www.afge.org/ll2epa).

### And the Winners are...



**\$5,000 Grand Prize** – Emeral Cooper  
**\$2,000 2nd Place** – Kali Bailey  
**\$1,000 3rd Place** – Arthur Wei  
**\$500 4th Place** – Joel Moss Levinson  
**\$500 5th Place** – Troy Ozuna  
**\$500 6th Place** – William Eigenmann  
**\$500 7th Place** – Spencer Schecht



## AFGE Members Take the Lead

**A**fter a rough 2017 that saw unprecedented attacks heaped on federal working people in this country, 2018 has somehow gotten off to an even more rocky start. With two government shutdowns already behind us this year, a reprehensible State of the Union address, and now the President's 2019 budget – it's clear that federal workers must be ready to fight. And AFGE members are leading the charge.

Since the start of the new year, AFGE members nationwide have been calling their members of Congress, holding rallies, and visiting their elected officials constantly.

Last year we leapt into action when the President started off his term with a hiring freeze, and this year we're seeing even more engagement in light of two shutdowns, disgusting attacks in the State of the Union, and a budget that does not even make sense.

The call totals mean on average, members of Congress have been contacted 150 times a day, and 4,445 times a month in 2018. And members aren't stopping there. Already this year there have been 409 Congressional visits – averaging nearly 7 a day.

Not only are AFGE members directly contacting their members of Congress, but they're holding rallies and events to let the public know too. In the first two months of 2018, AFGE has held or participated in 14 rallies. These public displays have covered budgetary shortfalls at Social Security, staffing shortages at the VA, the President's skimpy budget, and much more.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. With midterm elections this November we know that all of AFGE will be stepping up and standing together to ensure we elect a Congress that believes in public service and will stand up to the Administration.

***This year, AFGE members have made 8,891 calls using AFGE's call-in line. Pick up the phone today and join them, Call 1-844-669-5146 to fight for your pay and benefits.***

**AFGE**



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

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