



American Federation of Government Employees
(AFGE) Local 3313

The Spotlight Newsletter

Vol II Issue 4 – July 2017

President's Message

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 3313 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Eugene Johnson

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Gary Shoemaker (Executive VP)

Jennifer Rodes (VP for OST)

Tyler Patterson* (VP for PHMSA)

Shelia Wilson* (VP for FMCSA)

Derrell Lyles (VP for NHTSA)

Cynthia Cox-Grollman (VP for FTA)

TREASURER

Oranous Tavoosi

HUMAN RIGHTS & YOUTH DIRECTOR

Bernadette Walker

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SEARGENT AT ARMS

Eugene Kinard

*Denotes Past AFGE 3313 President

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Dear Bargaining Unit Employees,

Greetings and salutations to our members. Your membership constitutes the primary and most visible mechanism for the federal employee to gain a voice and be heard in this challenging political environment. There are those that seek to still or quiet our voice. That said, I suspect some see the Union as if it were some distant avenger perched atop a dimly lit building, silently observing DOT's late night escapades awaiting the opportunity to pounce whenever they spy an injustice. The problem with the Batman analogy is the Union is less like a solitary caped crusader, and more like a "band of heroes." Each member of the local is a potential hero in the band, and each has a role, no matter how small to give voice to the speechless, and presence at the table to the disenfranchised. The only reason the Union exists is because the law allows it, and sufficient numbers of heroes stood up to answer the call. Far too often we go about our days hoping for the best outcome, unaware that our rights are being trampled upon or that the "system" is limiting our potential. The "Union" is **the united strength of its member heroes** working to build a better work environment, to ensure policies that impact working conditions consider the rule of law in an equitable and impartial manner. Consider this, you are the Union, and the Union is you.



In Solidarity,
Eugene Johnson
Eugene Johnson
President, AFGE 3313





THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

As you know, the Congress of the United States is working on legislation that would eliminate some federal jobs, make terminating a federal employee easier, and weakening laws governing the existence of Unions and Union activity. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) opposes a House bill that would limit federal employees' access to union representation. The Official Time Reform Act of 2017 seeks to silence the voice of federal workers in decisions that impact their jobs, and the delivery of services the American people rely on. The legislation targets federal employees' use of official time, capping the amount of time union volunteers can spend providing representational work or meeting with agency leaders to discuss workplace improvements. Also, a financial disincentive is created for volunteer union representatives by cutting their pension accrual for time spent on representational work above an arbitrary cap.

“This legislation will tie the hands of supervisors and agency officials when it comes to scheduling meetings, and legal proceedings for union representatives, ultimately discouraging the use of official time,” said the AFGE in an [official letter of opposition](#) sent to Sens. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, and Elijah E. Cummings, D-Md., of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Our Union is aggressively opposing measures designed to limit your access to representation in matters that impact a fair and high-quality work environment.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **UNION MEMBERSHIP:** Dues are \$19.75 per pay period and are tax-deductible. Visit our local webpage <http://www.afge-local3313.org/> to review the tremendous member benefits. The more members we have, the stronger we are and the better we can represent you.
- **STRENGTH IN NUMBERS:** More members equal more resources for the National Office to challenge policies that are too big for you and I to engage alone. AFGE's current campaign is called **Big Enough to Win**¹ designed to safeguard jobs, wages, benefits and a better future.
- **JOIN THE FIGHT:** Share your ideas to improve your working conditions with your union representative. Take time to review the collective bargaining agreement² and suggest ways to make it better. The various Operating Administrations are either in the process of updating these documents or will be doing so in the next year or so. We need to hear your ideas to improve both Agency policies and the collective bargaining agreements.
- **BE OUR EYES AND EARS:** Notify us if you see a concern or problem in your area, so that we can investigate and determine if you are the victim of disparate or unfair treatment so that we can resolve it with management.

SEE IT. SAY IT. LET'S SOLVE IT!

¹

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=big+enough+to+win&qvvt=big+enough+to+win&view=detail&mid=D3D860B668F19BE8743AD3D860B668F19BE8743A&rvsmid=8F56AA0CF7019AB9BFE78F56AA0CF7019AB9BFE7&fsscr=0&FORM=VDQVAP>

² <http://www.afge-local3313.org/cbas.html>

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS (5 USC, Chapter 7114(a) (2) (A) & (B))

These rights, established by the Supreme Court, in 1975 in the case of Weingarten Inc., must be stated by the employee. The manager/supervisor has no obligation to inform an employee that they are entitled to union representation. If you are called into a meeting with any supervisor, manager, and/or agency official and you reasonably believe that the examination (questioning) may result in disciplinary action, stop and say: "I request that my union representative be present at this meeting. Until my union representative arrives or this meeting is rescheduled to include my union representative, I choose not to participate." Once an employee asks for a union representative, the management official may:

- Stop questioning until the representative arrives;
- Call off the interview; or
- Tell the employee the interview will end unless the employee gives up his/her rights to representation. (Never give up your right to representation).

LACK OF CANDOR

Recently, management decisions have been decidedly harsher than previous, comparable conduct decisions. The common denominator has been the perception of a lack of employee forth-rightness. The Union's legal team has often warned us that a witness that is not believable seriously jeopardizes an otherwise simple case. If you are being investigated; ask for union representation and most importantly, always tell the truth. A Lack of candor and falsification are distinct charges. While falsification involves an affirmative misrepresentation, and requires intent to deceive; a lack of candor charge, is a broader/more flexible concept which does not require intent to deceive, only an element of deception. In the end, Mama was right when she told you to always tell the truth, your employment may depend on it.

DOT-OIG (OFFICE of INSPECTOR GENERAL) PARKING GARAGE INVESTIGATION

Never park in the DOT garage without paying. Always follow the DOT Parking and transit policy. If it is found that you have been parking without paying, you could be held accountable through discipline or removal. Several employees have found out the hard way. The federal government leases the DOT headquarters building in Washington, DC, from The JBG Companies. Under the lease agreement, the Office of Transportation Services (TRANServe) manages parking services under a fee-for-service system. DOT uses the fees collected by the Parking and Transit Office (PTRAN) to pay for the Department's services contract with JBG, parking management costs, and general overhead costs. The DOT-OIG alleged recurring abuse of parking privileges by employees and contractors (drivers) in a February 2017 report of investigation. The DOT-OIG also alleged that drivers used the garage without paying PTRAN. Allegations included illicit duplication of the parking decals, intentional failure to pay, bypassing the garage attendants without paying, and acquiring fraudulent parking decals from others.

FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE (FPS) TO PATROL HQ GARAGE

Effective **June 5, 2017** the FPS will patrol the DOT HQ parking garage. The Department requested assistance from FPS to foster safe driving practices



in the garage. The posted speed limit in the garage is 5 miles per hour. All stop signs require a full stop, seatbelts are to be worn, texting and the operation of handheld devices are strictly prohibited while driving in the DOT HQ parking garage. Customers in violation of posted speed limits and stop signs will be issued a ticket by FPS. If you have any questions regarding this policy, you should contact the Parking and Transit Office at parking.transitoffice@dot.gov or on extension 61398. Please contact your union representative at the earliest point to ensure any adverse driving incident does not expand into a serious parking garage-related conduct matter.



Understanding TSP and Federal Benefits

On June 7th, 2017, Sheila Wilson, Vice President of FMCSA, set-up a TSP Lunch and Learn that featured a presentation from Dr. Rita Baily, CPA (pictured) from Affordable Benefits Solutions Incorporated. The presentation went beyond TSP and touched upon other aspects of insurance and retirement planning. Her presentation garnered rave reviews as she discussed:

- TSP's 5 funds;
- The difference between the Traditional TSP versus the Roth TSP;
- Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS);
- Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS);
- Different IRA options;
- Social Security Strategies;
- Financial Independence; and
- Withdrawal options at retirement.



Affordable Benefits Solutions

The 80 to 90 attendees were treated to good food and a good message. Feel free to visit the Affordable Benefits Solutions webpage <http://www.yourabsolutionsinc.com> to gain more information on their services. For example, the retirement climate workshop provides a comprehensive discussion of your Federal benefits: CSRS, FERS, Offset, TSP, Roth TSP, Social Security, FEGLI, a review of the recent laws passed by Congress and how they have affected your retirement and employee benefits. Understanding your Federal benefits and how they impact your current and future financial situation is critical to you and your loved ones financial security. Following is one of many testimonials:

Dear Shelia and Jennifer,

The workshop was very informative and Rita won me over; over the years I have attended TSP/retirement workshops but always came away feeling as though I was being sold something. Today was different for me, Rita just provided something more substantive.

--Jennifer Abdul-Wali--



Personal problems can impact your peace of mind and your ability to do your job. It's important to have access to resources that can provide support and sound guidance during difficult times. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is there for big and small life challenges. EAP professionals offer free and confidential assistance services from your agency within the limits of the law.

Call the EAP's toll-free number (1-800-222-0364

1-888-262-7848 (TTY))) or meet with an experienced, licensed

EAP counselor who may provide consultation, short-term problem

solving, coaching, or crisis management. The EAP offers access to legal and financial services, providing objective, targeted information on a wide range of issues. To access a wealth of resources to help you better manage your work and life responsibilities, visit the EAP Web site at www.FOH4You.com. The following list contains examples of situations where the Employee Assistance Program can help. The program is not limited to these specific subject areas, but the list is provided as a starting point.

- Emotional issues
- Mental health
- Disabilities
- Alcoholism/substance use and abuse
- Stress management
- Conflicts in the workplace
- Career counseling
- Performance or conduct issues with a troubled employee
- Domestic Abuse
- Elderly care, and related services
- Long-term/chronic illness
- Traumatic experiences
- Grief and loss
- Debt management
- Parenting issues
- Family, couple, or marriage issues



Welcome aboard to our newest AFGE 3313 Vice President –

Mr. Derrell Lyles

Derrell Lyles, from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Communications and Public Affairs Office, is no stranger to being a leader in this Local. Some may recall that when Antonyio Johnson resurrected the Union in 2008 from the jaws of inactivity, he assumed the role of AFGE Local 3313 President. None other than Mr. Derrell Lyles answered the call to assume

NHTSA's vacant Vice President position. After serving admirably from 2008 to 2012, Derrell reverted to the position of NHTSA Steward from 2012 to May 2017.

Antonyio Johnson recently retired from federal service, and moved to Carolina leaving a huge void that Derrell once again stepped in to fill. In accordance with the Local's bylaws, the Local President happily appointed Derrell to the Executive Board VP position. Derrell's energy, penchant for research, and willingness to engage difficult issues will continue to serve the Local well. Finally, please join me in welcoming Derrell aboard, and offer any support that you can.



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**General Membership Meeting**

(August 2017 – 12:00 to 1 pm)

General Membership Meeting (Budget)

(November, 2017 – 12:00 -1 pm)

AFGE Holiday Party

(December 2017 – Time TBD)

Union Office: Room P12-100 (Concourse Level)

Phone: (202) 366-3313

The American Federation of Government Employees Local 3313 - Union Representatives*The Federal Motor Carrier
Safety Administration**The Federal Transit
Administration**The National Highway Traffic
Safety Administration**The Office of the Secretary**The Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety Administration*

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You can find previous versions of the Spotlight at: <http://www.afge-local3313.org/doing.html>