In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee  
National VA Council, President

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In This Briefing: **AFGE Week in Review**

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We Did It! AFGE Activists Defeat Anti-Whistleblower Measure: AFGE activists on Thursday mobilized and successfully defeated a measure introduced by Rep. Jody Hice of Georgia that would have encouraged wrongful disciplinary actions, punished whistleblowers, and taken away worker protections. Even though the measure only targeted VA employees, if adopted, it would quickly make its way to other federal agencies. Read more.

9 Ways This House Panel’s Decision on Pentagon Funding Will Affect You: It took the House Armed Services Committee all day and all night on Wednesday to go over nearly 300 proposals in its 2016 Defense Authorization bill, but they finally approved it at around 4:30 a.m. Thursday morning – with several measures that affect AFGE members. Thanks to the awesome work of local activists, several AFGE-backed measures were adopted. Read more.


AFGE Doctor Appointed to Sit on Panel to Advise VA on Health Care for 9 Million Vets: AFGE’s very own Dr. James Martin has been appointed to a new 11-member Special Medical Advisory Group that will advise the Department of Veterans Affairs in providing health care for nine million veterans. Read more.

SSA Ordered to Negotiate with AFGE over Space Heater Usage: Thanks to the help and expertise of AFGE’s Field Services and Education Department (FSED), Social Security Administration (SSA) employees are no longer left in the cold, literally. SSA was trying to ban the use of space heaters in the office but also refused to do anything about the conditions that led to the use of the heaters or to provide a permissible replacement for the removed personal heater. Read more.
One Determined Activist, a Union Election Victory for AFGE: Sandra Caldwell
had been subject to mistreatment from management. She was told to work through her lunch, was denied mandatory training, and was denied due process and workers’ rights. But she had no union to turn to because management changed her unit’s bargaining unit status codes after their BRAC move to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., excluding her and her co-workers from AFGE. Read more.

Washington Post Publishes AFGE’s Response to Anti-VA Op-ed: The Washington Post has published AFGE’s response on the dismantling of the VA column by Charles Lane. The following is AFGE’s letter-to-the editor. Read more.

AFGE NVP Augusta Thomas Awarded A. Philip Randolph Legacy Award: AFGE congratulates our very own National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Augusta Thomas on receiving the A. Philip Randolph Legacy Award presented by the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Baltimore Chapter. Read more.

AFGE Celebrates Workers’ Memorial Day: Workers’ Memorial Day falls on April 28, and AFGE salutes federal employees who put their lives on the line every single day and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. We vow to continue to fight for safer working conditions for every government employee. Read more.

ICE Agents in San Diego Call for Management Accountability: Dozens of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and employees in San Diego staged a protest this week to bring spotlight to management corruption and cover-ups. Read more.

AFGE Releases DEFCON Orientation Video: We have just released a new orientation video for our DoD locals to use in their organizing efforts. Check it out here.

This Week in Labor History: April 28, 1970 - Congress creates OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The AFL-CIO sets April 28 as “Workers Memorial Day” to honor the hundreds of thousands of workers killed and injured on the job every year.

This Week’s Photo: House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith cast his vote while lying on the committee room floor at 4:14 a.m. Thursday morning. That’s because he just had two hip surgeries and the marathon markup of the 2016 Defense Authorization bill that started on Wednesday and ended 16 hours later didn’t help.
This Week’s Shout Out: This week’s shout out goes to Paul Ferris, Local 2516 president at Ft. Bliss, Texas, for asking Rep. Beto O’Rourke to offer an amendment to the 2016 Defense Authorization bill that would give DoD civilians opportunities to perform new work they wouldn’t otherwise get because of the cap on the size of the civilian workforce. The lawmaker offered the amendment, which was adopted by the House Armed Services Committee during a markup this week, despite strong opposition from the Pentagon and contractors.

Paul and his Local have developed a strong relationship with Rep. O’Rourke by meeting with him regularly and keeping him apprised about issues of concern to federal employees. This means that Rep. O’Rourke doesn’t just support federal employees and their families but that he can also be a leader on their issues.

This Week’s Tweet: Labor study finds 150 job-related deaths a year http://thehill.com/regulation/labor/240501-workers-suffer-150-deaths-per-day-report-finds ... via @thehill #dotj15 ~ @AFLCIO

This Week’s Health Tip: Sports nutrition is not a game. As an athlete, making high-energy food choices is vital. Half of your daily calories should come from complex carbs like whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Read more.

This Week’s Member Benefit: Earn thousands absolutely free through AFGE’s Real Estate Program. It’s a program that pays a cash rebate worth hundreds, even thousands of dollars when you buy or sell a home or other real estate property. Read more.