



*(December 2, 2015)*

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: FEDSMILL Articles**  
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**FEDSMILL** - *"Respect for Employee Rights, Ideas, Insights, Participation and Unions Generates the Power to Improve Government"*

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## **FLRA OFFERS TUTORIAL SLIDES FOR BARGAINING OVER OFFICE MOVES**

*While we are not about to call it absolutely the best advice any LR practitioner can get on how to bargain over office moves, if you are involved in that situation now or in the near future check out [FLRA's free slides](#) designed to guide practitioners through the process.*

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# AFGE CELEBRATES ITS NOT-SO-SECRET SUCCESS FORMULA

*Even a quick check of AFGE's current [national newsletter](#) will give you an idea of how proud and happy the union is to have achieved an on-going level of 300,000 dues paying members. While all but one of the more recognizable federal employee unions reported a membership increase to DOL for 2014, AFGE has become the indisputable long-term pacesetter for union membership growth. We intermittently have touched on why it has thrived when other unions are shrinking or at least just growing incrementally. But it might help others if we pulled from our individual posts to create a reasonably thorough, ten-item list of how AFGE did it.*

*Most of the story begins around the year 2000 when the leader of a large council of social security locals upset the in-house favorite to become National President. Here is what happened soon after that. [Continue reading](#) →*

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## FEDERAL WHISTLEBLOWER RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS?

*Whistleblowing laws have changed a lot in the last few years and most of the change has been good for employees. Union reps should make sure they can spot the situations where employees qualify for whistleblower rights. We are going to spend more time on the concept over the next few weeks, but the Office of the Special Counsel has put out a [good video explaining](#) the basics of this area of employee rights.*

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## TIMELINESS OF GRIEVANCES VERSUS REMEDY TIME PERIODS: LMR RUSSIAN ROULETTE

*Let's assume that a union filed a timely institutional grievance on May 1, 2014 claiming that its members had been denied full travel mileage reimbursement as required by the agreement and agency regs. Moreover, it claims that this has been*

going on for at least six years and asks that the agency or arbitrator award six years of retroactive travel allowances as a remedy. Must the arbitrator award six years of reimbursement if she finds the agency violated contract and regulation? [Continue reading](#) →