



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES  
NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS COUNCIL #53  
Affiliated with the AFL - CIO  
Mid-Term Bargaining Committee**

Oscar L. Williams Jr., Chairperson 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exec. V-President 29 S. Lake Street Danville, IL 61832-6101	Bill Wetmore, Member 3 <sup>rd</sup> Exec. V-President 2319 Alava Court Waldorf, MD 20603	Patrick Russell, Member 8 <sup>th</sup> Dist. Rep., NVAC VA Blacks Hills, HCS Hot Springs, SD 57747	Sandra Eggleston, Member 13 <sup>th</sup> Dist. Rep., NVAC VAMC Tucson Tucson, AZ 85723
---	--	--	--

June 12, 2006

Ronald E. Cowles, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Labor Management Relations (LMR)  
Department of Veterans Affairs, Suite 215  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Subject: VA Handbook 5017 "Employee Recognition and Awards"

Dear Mr. Cowles:

The National VA Council #53 is formally demanding to bargain on VA Handbook 6504 Employee Recognition and Awards in the Department. The negotiation of Employee Recognition and Awards are part of the National Master Agreement negotiation between the parties. Any change to VA Handbook 5017 can only be bargained once the national parties have completed the national negotiations. Therefore the proposed change to VA Handbook 5017 shall not affect AFGE bargaining unit members. If there is any conflict with the VA Handbook 5017 the VA/ AFGE Master Agreement shall govern.

Please cease and desist any implementation of changes to VA Handbook 5017 until the national Master Agreement negotiations have been completed. If you have any questions please call me at (217) 554-4866.

Sincerely,

Oscar L. Williams, Jr.  
Chairperson, Mid-Term Bargaining Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Vice President  
National VA Council #53

cc: Alma L. Lee, President National VA Council #53  
Executive Committee, NVAC

**AFGE: The Future Is Ours  
Creating A Shared Vision For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century**