

UNITY

Volume 32, No. 2

March 2010

Local 1346 wins EEO decision

By John Oertel
Staff Writer

A Service Representative (SR) in the Madison, Wisconsin Social Security Office has been awarded a total of \$140,000 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

“This is a victory for an SR who suffered for too long under an oppressive supervisor,” said Loni Schultz, the President of AFGE Local 1346, who represented the employee at the EEOC hearing. Vice President Dennis Wilson assisted her at the hearing and Executive Vice President Greg Bachinski served as Technical Assistant.

“This is also a win for the entire bargaining unit because it clearly shows that no one has to suffer in silence when they're bullied by a member of management,” Schultz believes.

Administrative Judge Henry Hamilton III ruled that the unidentified employee was discriminated against and was subjected to a hostile work environment. He also wrote that she suffered retaliation when management advertised a bilingual Claims Representative (CR) opening, knowing she would not qualify for the position.

“The agency did no objective fact finding before deciding to restrict the vacancy to the bilingual English/Spanish population,” Hamilton

stated. “(Manager Daniel) Grone-mus admits he based his determination of the need for bilingual employees on highly subjective anecdotal evidence.”

About 20% of the staff in Madison is bilingual, but the office only takes about three Spanish language interviews a month.

As part of his decision, Hamilton told SSA the employee would be given priority consideration when the next CR position was open in Madison. She was later promoted to Claims Representative, and man-

members of the public heard his comment.

“The Madison Social Security Office does not have an ‘official policy’ on which building entrance employees should use for entering and leaving the building during work hours,” Hamilton wrote in his decision. “Mulbrandon said in his experience employees did not use the front doors at SSA offices. (He) sits at the front of the office. It would be virtually impossible for him not to notice other employees using the front door.”

Mulbrandon has since retired from the agency.

Several other incidents were mentioned in the EEO ruling, but Hamilton noted “the agency took few, if any, steps to end Mulbrandon's discriminatory behavior toward the (employee).”

“I hope this decision will be a wake-up call for managers everywhere,” Schultz told **UNITY**. “And I certainly want employees to come forward when they face this same type of belligerent behavior. The Union will help them.”

The agency has appealed this decision (which includes monetary and non-monetary damages).

David Brooks, an attorney with AFGE Women's and Fair Practices Department, has agreed to represent the woman in her appeal.

“. . . no one has to suffer in silence when they're bullied by a member of management.”

Loni Schultz

agement said her name had risen to the top during the selection process.

The employee, who is over 40 and African-American, testified during the EEO hearing that she was frequently harassed by her supervisor, Jim Mulbrandon:

- In June, 2005 he yelled at her during an office-wide training. She later broke down and was seen crying.
- On January 4, 2006 he screamed at the employee as she walked through the front doors of the office. “You need to go to the back door,” Mulbrandon told her. Several other employees and

Union scores another win before the FLRA

Persistence and patience have paid off for a Social Security employee in New Jersey.

In 2007, she won an arbitration hearing and a promotion to Claims Representative - six years after she put in for the position. The employee (who did not want to be identified for this article) was also awarded full back pay and benefits, but the agency filed "exceptions" with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) because it disagreed with parts of the arbitrator's ruling.

The FLRA recently denied those exceptions, "so the employee will be able to keep her CR job and be paid all of the retroactive money that's due her," said Patti McGowan, the Union attorney who represented the woman at the hearing and while her case was pending at the FLRA.

"The agency owes this employee a lot of money - back to 2001, plus interest -- and I'm very happy she's getting it," McGowan told **UNITY**.

The Social Security Administration will also have to pay McGowan's attorney fees, as well as for her travel and prep time.

She credits Council 220 President Witold Skwierczynski and AFGE General Counsel Mark Roth with helping the employee when the FLRA was slow to make a decision.

"There's a lesson in this," McGowan believes. "When you have a problem, go to your Union. We will represent you, and we will represent you well, and we will keep at it. We don't work in isolation."

When arbitrator David Stein issued his 14-page ruling in 2007, he agreed with the Union that the employee was



Photo courtesy AFGE

Bringing the message to the Administration
AFGE and AFL-CIO Unionists march near the White House in February. About 700 people participated. (See related story page 4).

"stagnated in grade" and had not been properly considered for CR openings.

He also noted that she "received cash awards in recognition of her job performance and that she has never been the subject of any adverse or disciplinary action. The grievant has not exhibited any time and/or leave problems during her career with the agency."

During the arbitration hearing it was discovered that Ronald Farrington, the agency official who selected from the 'best qualified' lists in the Montclair and Paterson, NJ field offices, violated the contract when he had a conversation with the employee's supervisor and other management officials in the office where she worked.

"Farrington never interviewed (her) for the available positions," Stein wrote. "He allowed that he had been unaware of the grievant's receipt of cash awards or bonuses, although (she) had submitted evidence of same..."

Agency officials argued the employee should not be considered "stagnated in grade" because she didn't apply for every opening within a 30-mile radius of her work area, but that

idea was rejected by the Union and the arbitrator.

UNITY

Published bi-monthly by Council 220, organized under the American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO):

AFGE Council 220

PO Box 47638,

Baltimore MD 21244-7638

Ph: 410.965.6707 Fax: 410.966.7151

Contents copyright 2010 by AFGE Council 220. All rights are reserved. Articles herein (except reprints) may be reprinted with credit to the author and to the Unity by AFGE affiliates only. Editorial comment appearing in **UNITY** may not reflect the position of AFGE Council 220.

Editor: Terry Duncan

Staff: John Oertel, Suzanne Moseman

Letters to the Editor and other inquiries should be mailed to:

UNITY

26105 Hickory Lane

Olmsted Falls, OH 44138-2729

or e-mail: antelopetd@ameritech.net

Send all name and address corrections to your Local Treasurer. If you are a Field Office AFGE member and do not receive **UNITY**, ask your

Treasurer to make certain that the Council block shows "220" for your entry on the AFGE National membership roster

Member: AFGE Editors Association

'Explicit' ring no longer worn to work

"I know it when I see it"

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, when asked to define hard-core pornography

The next time your manager or supervisor talks to you about a "dress code" (which Social Security doesn't have), show them this article and then say, "you're lucky I don't wear a sex ring to work."

Marv Mueller has - and the agency allowed it for a very long time.

Mueller is the District Manager in Santa Rosa, Calif. and he sported a ring which graphically depicts a man performing a sexual act on a nude woman. Despite complaints from employees and the Union, Mueller's bosses did not intervene until recently.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," former Area Director Richard Stanley wrote in 2005, when the issue first came to light. "I think we need to remember that a wedding ring is intended as a symbol of one's devotion to another and is very personal. To make an issue of or take offense at Marv's and his wife's symbol of their union... seems wrong to me."

Charlie Estudillo, the First Vice President of Council 220 and Union Rep for the office, disagreed and he filed a grievance over the matter.

He cited a number of references in his three-and-a half page letter to management, including the Annual Personnel Reminder that were issued in October, 2009:

"You must not display offensive materials on your desk or within SSA-owned or leased space. Prohibited displays are generally those which are illegal, obscene, or offensive. This includes materials which

ridicule an individual group, involve nudity, are sexually explicit or contain racial, religious, or ethnic slurs."

"Employees have had to continue to suffer and endure the explicit ring," Estudillo wrote in his grievance presentation, "because shortly after Marv came to the SRDO (Santa Rosa District Office), an employee vocalized the complaints of other employees in the office regarding the sexually explicit nature of the ring and was rebuked by then Area Director Richard Stanley."

Estudillo asked for a ruling on whether the ring violates agency policy, and if it does, he wanted Mueller suspended for 28 days for violating the Standards of Conduct. He also requested that Mueller be

ordered to stop wearing the ring (or anything like it) in any SSA facility.

"If the wearing of the ring is determined to be acceptable,"

Estudillo stated, "then we want that finding in writing and communicated to all employees in the San Francisco Region, i.e., that employees may wear sexually explicit jewelry and/or clothing."

(Editor's note: About a month after filing the grievance, Estudillo wrote to SSA Commissioner Michael Astrue, Regional Commissioner Pete Spencer, and Area Director Richard Love about the situation. A day later, Mueller stopped wearing the sex ring, but employees in Santa Rosa are keeping a watchful eye in case it reappears. Estudillo's grievance was later denied).

More problems in Santa Rosa. . .

Management in the Santa Rosa District Office has developed its own set of rules, many of which contradict SSA regulations. For example:

- Three bank employees were allowed to set-up a table in front of the office where they sold banking products (including investments) and touted the services of a "personal banker." This conduct violated the Annual Personnel Reminders, which state: "You cannot engage in soliciting alms, commercial or political soliciting, vending of any kind, or displaying or distributing commercial advertising." The Union complained to the Regional Commissioner (RC) about this violation of the Standards of Conduct, but the bank employees came back two months later. The Union again complained to the RC and the bankers were finally told to leave. Santa Rosa managers said they "didn't know" the bankers had been there, even though the guard had told them.
- During a staff meeting, an employee went to the stock room to use a tissue. When she returned, she was told in front of the entire staff that tissues were for public use only and if she wanted one, she had to buy her own. Another employee later cut herself at work and used the first aid kit's band-aid. She was told she could not use the kit and had to bring her own band-aids.
- An employee who asked management about her work hours while serving on jury duty was told nothing. She later worked several hours and was denied both overtime and compensatory time. She was ordered to take two hours of leave or be charged AWOL because on two subsequent jury duty days, she went directly to the courthouse instead of first going to work (which she didn't have to do, according to management's own Personnel Policy Manual). The Union filed a grievance on the employee's lost hours of work and leave.

No relief from alleged harassment

By John Oertel
Staff Writer

“Every employee must be treated fairly without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or parental status. We have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, harassment, or reprisal.”

Social Security Commissioner Michael Astrue

A female employee in the Albertville, Alabama Social Security Office says she has endured more than seven years of sexual harassment and intimidation – and the agency apparently has no plans to help her.

The woman (who will not be identified) claims District Manager Jeff Murphree has repeatedly made advances toward her and threatened to fire her. During one meeting, he reportedly told the woman:

‘I am your ultimate supervisor. I am your third line supervisor and the one who has the final say. Your job, your career and your future are at my total discretion...I have the major input and the final decision about you and your job.’

She asked Murphree the purpose of the meeting.

‘He smiled and looked down at his crotch area and looked at me and just shook his head...He read from a piece of paper that (said) ‘discipline is at the discretion of the manager from a minimum of discipline up to termination.’ I said, ‘Are you saying that I am about to be disciplined?’ and he smiled, pushed back from the desk again, crossed his legs in a square, used both hands to point toward his crotch and said, ‘This could be as bad as you make it; it all depends upon you and what you do in this room right now.’”

Other management officials (including Supervisor Melissa Kane, District Manager Melissa Hill, Area Director Rose Mary Buehler, and Regional Commissioner Paul Barnes) are aware of the harassment but have apparently done nothing to stop it.

“Mr. Barnes was contacted by a State Senator,” the employee told **UNITY**, “but he considers this a ‘closed case.’ He will not even respond to the senator or the Union. I also wish Ms. Buehler would step up and take some action, but so far she’s refused to do that.”

More problems developed after the woman filed an EEO complaint. Jose Cotera, manager of the Tuscaloosa, Alabama SSA office, conducted what he called a “fact finding” investigation, but the employee said she was interrogated for about five hours, refused permission to use the bathroom, and was told she could not call her family even though the interview lasted until about 7 p.m.

“Mr. Cotera was clearly biased and displayed no investigative skills,” wrote Witold Skwierczynski, the President of

the National Council of SSA Field Operations Locals, in a letter to Commissioner Astrue.

“Mr. Cotera was threatening, condescending, impatient, rude, arrogant, loud and unprofessional during his interview with (the woman). His big concern seemed to be returning to Tuscaloosa at a reasonable hour.”

The employee has asked for a transfer several times, and Skwierczynski urged Astrue to approve the request. He also recommended that Murphree, Kane, and Hill be removed from any type of supervisory position.

“Such individuals should never be allowed to supervise bargaining unit employees in the future and should be appropriately disciplined,” Skwierczynski wrote.

Legislative conference attendees encourage Congress to give field more resources

“We should not be discouraged” with the pace of change in Washington, DC, John Gage recently told a gathering of AFGE activists, including 70 Council 220 activists from around the country.

Gage, AFGE National President, rallied the crowd attending the annual AFGE legislative conference just before it marched with other Unions to demonstrate support for a national election by Transportation Safety Officers to unionize. (see photo, page 2).

Representatives from Council 220 met with House and Senate staff members and spent several days presenting the concerns of field office employees; one of them is SSA’s continued use of iClaims (internet claims). [The Union’s six-page report](#) (posted to www.afgec220.org) is a scathing analysis of how the Agency is misleading Congress on the efficiency of iClaims.

David Sheagley and Cindy Bonneau, from Ohio’s Local 3448, met with Congressman Steve LaTourette (R-OH) concerning the 2011 budget. LaTourette sits on House appropriations committee, which is in charge of setting the specific expenditures of government agencies, including Social Security.

“We presented several issues, including the out of whack management to bargaining unit ratios in offices,” said Sheagley. “We voiced the general need for more dollars to pay for front line staffing.”

Sheagley, also the Chicago Regional Vice President for Council 220, said employees—particularly Union representatives—should contact the staff of their Senators and House members to voice their concerns about iClaims and other problems.



Beth Kelshaw and friend

Arbitrator orders back pay for suspended SR

An arbitrator has ruled in favor of a long-time Service Representative who works in the Springfield, New Jersey Social Security Office.

The SR (who asked not to be identified) accidentally accessed the computer records of a co-worker, but Arbitrator Jacqueline Imhoff wrote in her opinion that the “agency failed to prove any connection between the two other than they had both worked in the same busy office for six months, and that the (SR) had processed a third party draft for her.

“I find it quite possible that the (Service Rep) never knew (the other employee's) last name. It is a difficult name to pronounce and recognize in written form and most likely was not used often, if at all, in the office.”

The SR was represented by Joseph Cooke, First Vice President of AFGE Local 2369. During the arbitration hearing, he acknowledged the Service Rep had made a mistake, but Cooke said it was “inadvertent” and there was never any intent to harm the other employee.

Imhoff ordered the suspension removed from the SR's record and all pay or benefits she lost be given back to her.

AFGE mourns loss of Indy Union rep

“She loved her family, friends, a good party, a good fight, and she loved her Union.”

That's how David Sheagley, an AFGE Regional Vice President for the Chicago area, described Beth Kelshaw after she recently lost her battle with cancer. She was 51.

Kelshaw was President of Local 3571 in Indianapolis from 2005 through September, 2009. That's when she stepped down because of illness and the treatment that rendered her unable to continue.

“Beth was an exceptional leader,” Sheagley remembers. “She was able to assess each individual situation and do what was necessary. She could always see both sides of the argument.

“Beth had a great rapport with employees as well as management. She did not command respect but earned the respect of all by her everyday activities.”

Kelshaw's career at Social Security began at the Indianapolis Eastside office in 1976. She was a stay-in-school, and after graduation, she became a Claims Development Clerk. In 1980, she was promoted to Tele-service Representative; nine years later, she received her promotion to Claims Representative.

She served on her Local's Executive Board and automatically became the President of 3571 when the person holding that position retired. She was formally elected to the job in 2007.

“She accomplished a great deal as President,” Sheagley said. “She won grievances, employees' jobs back, and more than one arbitration.

“Beth gave so much of herself to the job that at times you could see the stress. But the next day, she was ready to go again to face more challenges. She loved a good laugh, a joke, and she loved people.”

Kelshaw is survived by Randy, her husband of more than 30 years, as well as sons Dylan, Aaron, and Anthony.

For Union News and a searchable SSA-AFGE National Agreement, go to
www.afgec220.org

OIG: Too much!

A detailed report from Social Security's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) showed the agency spent more than \$675,000 on last year's "Management Tango" conference at the Arizona Biltmore Hotel.

OIG's analysis was sent to U.S. Senator Charles Grassley, the ranking member of the Finance Committee.

San Francisco Regional Commissioner Pete Spencer sponsored the July meeting, attended by about 674 people. They included field office, teleservice center, and Program Service Center (PSC) supervisors and managers, as well as Regional Office staff, Headquarters personnel, State DDS representatives, and others. Agency regulations require SSA Commissioner Michael Astrue to approve conferences this size, making him responsible for the event.

The Arizona Biltmore is referred to as the "Jewel of the Desert" and has eight swimming pools, seven tennis courts, two 18-hole golf courses, a spa and five restaurants.

While OIG found that most of the costs associated with the meeting were legitimate, it questioned whether approximately \$13,400 spent for hors d'oeuvres for a reception the first evening of the conference should have been allowed.

"We do not believe," the report stated, "the reception met (Government) criteria since (1) it was held at 6 p.m., after the formal training was finished; (2) it did not include '...essential discussions, lectures or speeches...' (the agency describe the reception as a "kickoff social activity" and "informal reception" with "festivities" to include "musical entertainment and dancing"); and (3) its agenda noted it was "optional," which indicates full participation was neither expected nor required."

Several private companies (including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Starbucks, and five professional baseball teams) also donated items and services to the conference as door prizes. OIG called management's acceptance of those donations "inappropriate."

"First, we believe the acceptance of outside donations may be mistaken for SSA's endorsement of a product... Since Blue Cross/Blue Shield is one of many companies that provide health insurance to SSA employees, the acceptance and distribution of such items to SSA employees may be interpreted as SSA's endorsement of this company's product.

"Second, the acceptance of these donations by an SSA employee may violate Federal ethics guidelines, which prohibit an employee from... accepting any gift from a prohibited source or given because of the employee's official position. Also, the acceptance of such gifts may constitute an improper augmentation of SSA's appropriation."

OIG also revealed that Social Security sponsored 185 conferences from January, 2001 through August, 2009. They were attended by 34,429 people at a cost of \$26.4 million.

Costs Related to July, 2009 Management Tango

Employee Travel	\$503,774
Hotel Meals/Refreshments	67,176
Audiovisual Services	67,816
Contracted Instructors	24,250
Other Costs	12,065

According to the OIG report, the instructors included "three trainers and a dance company."

Workers to receive \$40 million; retailer agrees to settle

The world's biggest retailer has agreed to pay \$40 million dollars to settle a lawsuit filed in 2001.

Wal-Mart, which has a long history of abusing employees and has consistently blocked their efforts to unionize, recently settled a class-action lawsuit which originated in Massachusetts. The company was accused of denying meal and rest breaks to workers, altering their time cards, and refusing to pay them overtime.

"The lawsuit and settlement underscore why Wal-Mart workers need a Union and why Americans should support that cause," said Rich Couture, the President of AFGE Local 1164, which covers all of New England. "These workers were deprived of breaks and lunches that millions of Americans take for granted. Wal-Mart fires its employees over trivial matters without due process, something a contractual grievance procedure would remedy.

"The company's refusal to pay workers a living wage and provide real benefits is costing taxpayers billions in food stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies, so the American people are subsidizing the 'low cost' of Wal-Mart's wares."

About 87,500 current and former Wal-Mart employees in Massachusetts will benefit from the settlement. They should receive between \$400 and \$2500, depending on the number of years with the company.

In 2008, the retail giant agreed to pay up to \$640 million to settle 63 wage-and-hour violations lawsuits.

Wal-Mart spokeswoman Daphne Moore said these recent allegations are not "representative of the company we are today," but Couture has his doubts.

"This settlement is a victory against the 'greed is good' management-first mentality which pervades Wal-Mart," he told UNITY. "Indeed, it's what SSA would be like if management had their way."

Tired of working hard with no rewards? Well, here's an idea. . .

*Slow down, you move too fast.
You got to make the morning last,
Just kicking down the
cobblestones,
Looking for fun and feelin'
groovy.*

**- Simon and Garfunkel
The 59th Street Bridge Song
("Feelin' Groovy")**

By Paul Demler

Social Security's mean-spirited appraisal system - commonly known as PACS - is hated by most employees and misunderstood by many others. Unfortunately, it's a perfect system for managers and supervisors because PACS is tied directly to performance awards. It is the proverbial dangling carrot, but only a few ever get a good taste.

You know how the game works. Every October, some management official in your office holds a performance expectation meeting to supposedly tell you what it takes to be a "successful" employee. Each fiscal year is a start-over, so no matter where you ended up on September 30, you are 'born again' October first.

You may ask what it takes to achieve or retain an "outstanding" level. That question, however, is generally ignored or you're told that only your supervisor will know when they see it! At your mid-year progress review, and possibly at other random times, you receive critiques and/or guidance on how to do "better" (an extremely vague term that's perfect for management!) Expectations can run high that if you do "better" you will reach the pinnacle of performance assessment.

Then comes the really bad news. You're given an appraisal where 3s and 5s are randomly inserted so that only a few are rated with the coveted overall average of 4 or more to be "eligible"

for a ROC award. Some employees have been told they are a very high level 3 - but you can't quite get there unless you do "more" (another extremely vague term that's perfect for management).

If you're tired of this song-and-dance, we need to change the dynamics of PACS starting right now! It's time to reverse the flow of communication, take the initiative, and turn the carrot around.

It seems to me that if there is a "high" level 3 then there must be a "low" 3, so employees should be asking their supervisors, "What is the minimum amount of work I have to do to achieve a level 3, avoid a performance improvement plan, and still keep my job?"

What do you think management would do if we all chose to be no better than least "successful"? I can just hear the chorus of their collective wailing... but it would be music to my ears!

I am *not* advocating a work slow-down (that would be illegal), but if this agency wants to treat us like "average" employees, then we should work like average employees.

One other thing to remember: there are no negatives in the level 3 performance standards so there shouldn't be any negative comments or suggestions on how to improve in any of your PACS documentation unless it's clear the improvement will get you a level 5 rating!

And let's be honest: if you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you always get (which is little or nothing when the awards are passed out). Meanwhile, management officials routinely get bonus money for the work you produce.

(Editor's Note: Paul Demler is President of AFGE Local 3342 in New York State).

Union asks Fresno manager: 'Where is the incident report?'

David Corneliuz, the District Manager of the Fresno West Social Security Office, recently refused to write an Incident Report - even though a bomb sniffing dog and three members of the Federal Protective Service (FPS) went into that facility while the public and employees were there.

"The manager should have informed the employees by broadcast message and evacuated the building during the search," said Sylvia Norman, a Claims Representative and the President of AFGE Local 3172. "It was frightening to be interviewing with armed guards busting in with a dog. The dog approached every desk and sniffed the

claimant at my desk. We employees had no clue what was going on.

"I think the manager used poor judgment. If a bomb search does not warrant an incident report, I don't know what will."

Norman said that because of a threat at a nearby building, FPS officers decided to search the Social Security office as well. Nothing dangerous was found in the office.

Incident reports are required as part of the AFGE/SSA National Agreement (Article 9, Sections 3 and 7): the Union is entitled to "receive all reports of security incidents involving threats to employees, their offices and property" in accordance with Agency guidelines.



**American Federation of
Government Employees (AFL-CIO)**
Local 3448
P. O. Box 833
Newark, OH 43058-0833

Please send change of address to your Local treasurer

Inside:

Local wins EEO complaint	pg 1
FLRA sides with Union	pg 2
Explicit ring no longer worn	pg 3
No relief from harassment	pg 4
AFGE mourns loss of rep	pg 5
OIG: Last word on 'Tango'	pg 6
Tired of PACS reviews?	pg 7

Management allows man with a gun in NY FO

Some management officials back east apparently think they living in the wild, wild West.

AFGE's Rich Kirchner recently interceded with Regional Commissioner Beatrice Disman on behalf of the Freeport, NY, field office employees. Kirchner is Council 220's New York Regional Vice President.

"(In February), a claimant, who announced he had a gun, was taken ahead of the line and interviewed in a private interviewing room," Kirchner said. "A bargaining unit employee was required to interview the man, who told the guard he had a "conceal carry" permit and was in possession of a handgun."

Virginia Schroeder, Operations Supervisor, sent only a cryptic "pop up" message that the client was in the private interviewing room, and to see her regarding the interview.

This is at least the second recent incident where an individual brought a

gun into an SSA office. In November last year, a visitor to the Zanesville, Ohio, office was restrained in handcuffs when the guard became aware the man carried a handgun and made what was considered a threatening gesture. The local police department did not pursue charges.

Suzanne Schlitt, TE (Technical Expert), accepted the interview before she knew the circumstances of why the client was sequestered. Schroeder informed her that she and District Manager Mary Jean Baker wanted the client out of the public reception area because he said he was carrying a concealed weapon. She said the OS insisted that management could "waive" the law prohibiting weapons in the office, despite the fact that possession of firearms in federal facilities is prohibited by Title 18 of the U.S. Code.

Schlitt said some of the client's comments during the interview gave her even more concern.

"I'm having a difficult time accepting that my OS didn't know that people with guns could not come into the office," Schlitt wrote to Kirchner.

Other employees in the office were "very upset" the client was given special treatment rather than follow the law, according to Helen Stellin, TE.

William Stellwagen, TE, voiced employee concerns that the client will return with the firearm:

"(FPS) could possibly contact him to advise that DO manager made an error in interpreting federal law and that under no circumstances should he return to the office with a firearm," he said.

"This issue certainly caught Bea Disman's attention," Kirchner said. "She has arranged for an Area II meeting with FPS (Federal Protective Service) and OIG (Office of the Inspector General) where management will be instructed on protocol on guns."