



National Council of SSA Field Operations Locals

Vol.3 No.1 December 2023

Unity Magazine



For the People...By the People



AFGE Council 220 Making Strides Together in 2023

We mobilized and drove change around the biggest issues of the moment

- The 33 C220 affiliate locals worked hard filing countless grievances and secured key arbitration wins!
- We fought hard and won a change in OLMER leadership—twice!
- We secured a better contract for our employees and members!
- We trailblazed a better tool to work directly with agency leaders to further improve working conditions—The Union Management Cooperation Councils (UMCCs).
- We achieved a President nominated and Senate confirmed Commissioner—Welcome Commissioner Martin O'Malley!
- We spoke out and avoided government shutdowns and furloughs!
- We launched a grassroots local and nationwide media campaign surrounding our budget and SSA state of emergency. We were interviewed by NPR, Marketplace, NBC nightly news, CBS nightly news, MSNBC Now, MSNBC Katie Phang show, with a brief cameo on Good Morning America, and featured on local news networks all across the country.
- We increased internal and external communications with sharable eye-catching flyers and resurrected UNITY - the official council newsletter. We diligently updated materials on our new website and social media pages to keep members and the public informed and engaged.
- We led national educational webinars on topics like workplace bullying, shutdowns and more!
- We organized or participated in three rallies and two legislative conferences.
- We testified in front of the Senate Special Committee on Aging Chair, Senator Robert Casey, in a field hearing titled: Securing Social Security: Accessing payments and preserving the program for future generations.

In Unity we have accomplished so much!

**On behalf of AFGE Council 220, I want to wish you all a very
Happy Holidays!**

**In Solidarity,
Jessica LaPointe, AFGE C220 President**



AFGE Solidarity and Union Empowerment in 2023

L. Gregory Dorsey

Congratulations on a fantastic year of unity, collaboration, and progress! As Unity Editor, you've been at the helm of fostering connection, understanding, and a shared vision *for the people, by the people*. It's a testament to your solidarity that we've achieved so much together.

This year has been a tapestry woven with threads of resilience, empathy, and determination. We've overcome challenges, bridged divides, and created a stronger, more cohesive community. It's incredible to witness the power of collective effort and the positive impact we've made. I'm excited to see what we can do in 2024.

Solidarity is the bedrock of our strength as a union, especially when facing formidable challenges. It's the unbreakable bond that unites us in purpose, resilience, and determination. When we stand together, shoulder to shoulder, we become an unstoppable force capable of overcoming even the most daunting hurdles.

In the face of significant challenges, solidarity is not merely a concept; it's a lifeline. It means recognizing that the struggles of one are the struggles of all. It's about rallying around each other, offering support, and amplifying each other's voices.

When we are united in solidarity, we pool our diverse talents, perspectives, and experiences to find innovative solutions. We draw strength from our collective wisdom and shared commitment to a common goal. Solidarity empowers us to endure adversity, navigate complexities, and emerge stronger on the other side. Moreover, it's essential to understand that solidarity isn't limited to our immediate circle. It extends beyond, encompassing alliances, partnerships, and bridges built with other groups who share our values and goals. Together, we create a network of support and collaboration that magnifies our impact.

Solidarity is not just a response to challenges; it's a way of life that shapes our union's identity. It fosters trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging among us. It reinforces the belief that by working together, we can surmount any obstacle and create a brighter future for everyone.

This is where **I want to thank President Jessica LaPointe for leading the charge for us all to come together in solidarity for the betterment of our Union, Agency and ultimately to those we serve, the American citizens.**

Let's continue nurturing an environment where every voice is heard, valued, and respected. Together, we'll write the next chapter of our union, filled with innovation, togetherness, and progress. Here's to another year of growth, unity, and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve!

Happy Holidays!

In Solidarity,

L. Gregory Dorsey

***C220 UNITY Editor
AFGE Local 3184***



Jimmy Botts, Thanking Unions this Holiday Season

Yes, I have been guilty of not always remembering the sacrifices of union activists before me, so we can enjoy an 8 hour work day, insurance benefits, generous leave, holiday pay, overtime/credit hours, flexible work schedules (telework, AWS, flextime), safe working conditions, pensions, parental leave, sick leave/FMLA, and fair wages. I could go on and on, but you get the point.

I wanted to share how the rights unions have fought hard to win benefited me and my family. This year my daughter got married. Her life corresponds with my SSA career. She was born within 6 months of my first day at SSA. Lets see how my union helped us during the last 25 years:

- Many doctor visits for allergy shots and eye procedures for my Makayle- Union provided health insurance and paid Family Friendly sick leave.
- Numerous outings to attend school events, clubs, church outings, and other extra-curricular activities- flexible work schedules and credit hours and leave.
- Holiday celebrations, cookouts, family time- paid holidays and annual leave
- Prom dresses, fall formals, car at sixteen, WEDDING costs 😊 – arguably fair wages and certainly overtime came in handy,
- Safe and healthy work environment- no lost time due to injuries and sickness caused by unhealthy and unsafe work areas.
- TSP and pensions- so I can be prepared for next phase of life, spending time with and meeting the needs of grandchildren!
- Job security- my union was there to protect my job, pay, and benefits. I have never had to worry about my next paycheck. My union (and me as your union President) constantly lobbied congress to increase/maintain timely pay and benefits.

I think you get the point. Sometimes we (me included) forget to appreciate the everyday benefits we enjoy by working in an office with a union contract and benefits. But I will never forget the joy of my daughter and her wedding day. So, thanks for all those that came before us that fought, struggled, sacrificed, and even died so we may have it better today! May each of you enjoy a blessed holiday weekend!

Members—please join our Facebook page at “AFGE- LOCAL 3984 (Kentucky)” to see a few pictures of this wedding day and stay updated on our union news.

In Solidarity,
Jimmy Botts, AFGE C220 Atlanta Regional Vice President



JOEL D. SMITH

The Gift of Paid Holiday Leave: Celebrating a Century of Workers' Rights

As the holiday season graces us with its warmth and festivities, we find ourselves surrounded by twinkling lights, the aroma of freshly baked cookies, and the joy of spending time with loved ones.

Amidst the celebration and merriment, it is important to take a moment to reflect on the precious gift of paid holiday leave and the century-long journey that brought us to this point.

Over the years, the concept of paid holiday leave has evolved from a rare and hard-fought benefit to an essential part of modern labor rights. Its history is intertwined with the struggles and triumphs of the labor movement, a testament to the determination of workers who fought for dignity, fair treatment, and a better quality of life.

The roots of this tradition can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when workers, many of whom were part of burgeoning labor unions, began to demand more than just a fair wage. They sought time off to spend with family and friends during holidays, recognizing the importance of rest and rejuvenation. It was during these years that the labor movement began to make its mark, advocating for better working conditions and improved benefits.

One pivotal moment in this journey was the Pullman Strike of 1894. Although the strike itself did not secure paid holiday leave, it did draw national attention to the labor movement and the injustices faced by workers. This event set the stage for the broader labor rights movement that would follow, ultimately leading to significant legislative changes.

The Adamson Act of 1916, which established the eight-hour workday with overtime pay for certain railroad workers, was a landmark piece of legislation

that laid the groundwork for labor rights in the United States. While it did not explicitly mandate paid holiday leave, it marked an important step toward regulating working conditions and acknowledging the value of worker's time. The Second World War played a crucial role in solidifying the concept of paid holiday leave. Recognizing the importance of maintaining both production and morale on the home front, the government encouraged employers to provide paid holidays for their workers. This wartime gesture emphasized the significance of rest and relaxation for workers and their families.

The labor movement's advocacy and tireless efforts continued to bear fruit in the post-war era. Workers and their unions, through collective bargaining and activism, secured paid holiday benefits for countless employees across various industries. Paid holiday leave became an integral part of employment contracts, a cherished gift that recognized the importance of work-life balance.

Today, paid holiday leave is a standard employment benefit in many industries, allowing workers to enjoy precious moments with their loved ones during holidays. While the journey to this point has been long and challenging, it is a testament to the enduring spirit of the labor movement and its commitment to worker's rights.

As we celebrate this holiday season, let us not forget the significance of paid holiday leave – a gift that represents the progress we have made in ensuring fair treatment, dignity, and quality of life for workers. It is a reminder of the collective strength of those who came before us and a testament to the importance of standing up for what is right.

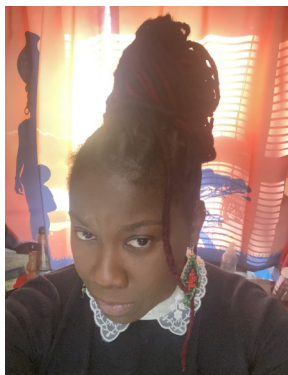
So, as you gather with family and friends, remember to savor the gift of paid holiday leave – a century in the making – and appreciate the hard-fought battles that made it possible. May your holidays be filled with joy, warmth, and the knowledge that we continue to progress toward a more just and equitable world for all workers.

Happy Holidays!

In Solidarity,

Joel Smith

**AFGE Local 3184 President
C220 3rd Vice President**



Sherry Jackson

Legislative Year in Review and 2024 Outlook

Here is a briefing of 2023 C220 legislative action and a look forward into 2024. AFGE serves members from diverse backgrounds, lives, and beliefs that range from red and blue areas, parents, children, and grandparents, aunts and uncles, veterans, etc. who choose to serve the American public and in kind choose to serve their coworkers.

Our differences are our strengths. This is why we advocate on a policy basis with external people and advocate within our communities and with our other brothers and sisters that fall under the umbrella of AFL-CIO.

Despite the House of Representatives changing power and there being challenges, over the past few years we have been able to build goodwill and bridges across the aisle. Instead of focusing on differences, focus on the items that will bring us support in a way that is meaningful to the persons that we are convincing. For example, some of the staunchest members in both houses who are anti-telework/workplace flexibilities have concerns that because their constituen-

cies are in rural areas, workplace flexibility will disadvantage that we have taken the opportunity to explain how the flexibility services rural areas better as now they can save their resources like gas and get the same service over the phone as the public that lives in more metropolitan areas. Therefore, we have made inroads and gaining support for workplace flexibility by tying workplace flexibility to improved infrastructure and expansion of internet. In the last year, continued alliance building within the Government Accountability Office that began in 2019 has made SSA accountable for what it is spending.

As Congressional staffers have moved on, I remain in touch with them and have been able to develop new resources for members in their moves as relevant to the needs of our membership. Sustained work with committees such as Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) panel; Senate and House Appropriations Committees, Oversight; Office of Personnel Management, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Congress' Aging Committees and many more. Because of this, we have doors open to discuss things such as locality pay, the ability to have instant contacts for items such as safety in offices and have been able to advocate in areas such as relocations and hardships for parking and the like.

AARP is another tie that has been developed and has and continues to be a resource for our membership. Other organizations that have stood with us include Disabled American

Veterans, American Federation of Teachers, Communication Workers of America, and our other Federal Government brethren. This is NOT an all-inclusive list of partners. In June 2023, I was able to represent our employees at the announcing of the expanded Social Security Act with Ranking Member John Larson and Congresswoman Jahana Hayes when they called me to participate in the announcement of the expanded Social Security 2100 Act.

We also participated in two legislative conferences this year, in February 2023 with AFGE and another in July 2023 with the General Committee. I will continue to report news and items of interest to the body to make sure we all stay informed and are able to advocate for our members.

In the new year, I will continue to assist regions and locals in things such as scheduling appointments for LEGCONs or relationship building with partners, officials or other agencies, going on appointments with them, assisting with various situations.

Through it all, we must tie our needs to the public in order to advance the bettering of working conditions for our members as we head into the new year for maximum payoff.

I wish you all a Happy Holidays and a prosperous New Year.

In Solidarity,

Sherry Jackson

C220 2nd Vice President

C220 Legislative Action Chair



Retirees in Action

Witold Skwierczynski

AFGE Council 220, the labor union for employees who work in Social Security field offices and tele-service centers, also represents retirees. There are over 1800 retiree members that formerly worked in SSA field offices and teleservice centers. Council 220 has a Retiree

Committee that has been established to provide representational services for retirees and to encourage them to become active in their locals. I have served as the Chairperson of the C220 Retiree Committee since August, 2022.

AFGE National office has assigned staff to concentrate on representing retiree interests. Each of AFGE's 12 districts have up to two (2) retiree coordinators who coordinate the retiree program in their respective geographical districts. Their role is to engage in outreach to all the locals in the district and to encourage those locals to inform members who are about to retire of the benefits of maintaining their membership after retirement. In addition, the district retiree coordinators are responsible for engaging retirees in becoming active in their union.

They are specifically charged with encouraging retiree members to engage in:

- Legislative activity
- Political activity
- Mentoring new union leaders
- Organizing
- Communications
- Volunteering for events and community services
- Becoming active in AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils and the AFL-CIO sponsored Alliance for Retired Americans

A resolution was passed at the AFGE Council 220 Convention in August 2022 that charged the Council Retiree Committee with a number of responsibilities. Our responsibilities are similar to those of the District Retiree Coordinators but with a particular Social Security focus. The committee is responsible for identifying legislation that specifically impacts retirees and SSA employees. We monitor Congressional hearings that deal with SSA and retiree issues and inform the busy union leaders on what happened at these hearings. We also encourage retirees and non-retirees to contact their legislators on key bills before Congress and ask their representatives in Congress to support legislation that benefits SSA employees and retirees.

As chair of the Committee I attend Council conventions and yearly Executive Council Caucuses and report on the activities of the Retiree Committee as well as recommend action by the union to support the concerns of SSA retirees. I

also participate in monthly meetings with AFGE staff and the District Retiree Coordinators to plan strategy on how to best represent AFGE retirees.

I have been active in the union since the day I finished 13 weeks training to be a CR in 1973 and until I retired in 2018. I served as a steward in my office in Chicago when I was a probationary employee. I was as an officer of Local 1395 in Chicago. I held various positions in Council 220 and was the President of the Council from 1983 - 2018 when I retired. I continued to offer my services to the union. It's been a privilege to be able to continue to assist SSA employees and retirees and to try to make their work lives and retirement experience better.

Retirees have a unique ability to help their union. They are no longer impacted by the work time constraints and the pressures of work. We have time on our hands. Most former SSA retirees that I know still care about what happens in Social Security. They care about the program and want it to succeed. They care about their former colleagues and want them to be able to do their jobs without constant pressure and stress from unsympathetic management and Congressional reluctance to give SSA the resources employees need to do their jobs.

No one expects active retirees to engage in the entire laundry list of functions that I listed above. However, each of us is entirely capable of doing something to help themselves and their union.

Currently there are three (3) key issues that both AFGE nationally and Council 220 have identified that specifically impact retirees :

1. WEP/GPO rescission. There are currently 2 million CSRS retiree and state pension retirees that are impacted by The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and 724,000 retirees impacted by Government Pension Offset (GPO). WEP reduces your SSA benefit from your own earnings by as much as $\frac{1}{2}$ if you are receiving a CSRS pension. GPO offsets a spousal or survivor benefit that you may be eligible for by up to $\frac{2}{3}$ of your CSRA pension. Many of us feel that this legislation that passed as part of the 1983 Social Security amendments unfairly targets government workers. Bills have been introduced in Congress called the Fairness Act to rescind WEP/GPO. S-597 in the Senate has 49 co-sponsors and HR-82 in the House has 300 cosponsors.

You can google

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/118/hr82> and click on “cosponsors” to see whether your Congressperson has cosponsored HR 82. If so, call them and thank them. If not, ask them to cosponsor it. For the Senate bill just substitute “s597” at the end of the link and you can access the same information for the Senate bill. Since you have 2 Senators, you will need to make 2 phone calls. The site has a telephone feature that you can click on and it informs you about the number to call. If you don’t know your House district, you click the phone call feature and type in

your address. You will be informed regarding your house district. The call will be answered by an aide. Just tell them what the issue is and what you want the congressman to do. The aide keeps a tally of the calls.

Wasn’t that easy?

HR-4583 in the House sponsored by Congressman Larson is a bill that extends SSA’s Trust Fund solvency by resuming taxing the wages of those who make over \$400,000. This bill also restores auxiliary benefits for students up to age 22, changes the COLA formula to more accurately reflect senior expenses, eliminates the 5 month disability waiting period and, also, repeals WEP/GPO. AFGE supports this bill and so should you. Let your Congressperson know that you support it.

2. The Equal COLA Act. FERS retirees receive up to 1% less COLA on their pensions than CSRA annuitants for any COLA increase of over 2%. For example, in 2014 CSRA retirees will receive a 3.2% COLA increase and FERS annuitants will only receive a 2.2% COLA increase. This bill will make both COLAs equal to the amount received under the CSRA formula.

HR-44 in the House has 44 cosponsors and S-3194 has 5 cosponsors. Call your Congresspersons and Senators and ask them to cosponsor the bill; and if they have already done so, thank them. Sponsors and cosponsors are listed in govtrack.

3. Nursing Home and Hospital Staffing Standards – This bill would set standards that require a minimum number of nurses per pa-

tients in hospitals and nursing homes.

Since seniors utilize these institutions more than non-seniors, it should be of interest to them. I was on an AFL-CIO zoom meeting on this bill and heard numerous horror stories about the treatment of seniors due to hospitals and nursing homes failing to have adequate nursing staff. Support HR-2530 and S-1113 and call your Senator and congresspersons and ask them to cosponsor the bill or thank them if they are listed as sponsors on govtrack. HR-2530 has 86 cosponsors and S-1113 has 9 cosponsors. Support these bills and communicate with your Senators and Congressperson.

Retirees are also valuable as activists in political action. Federal employees are affected more than anyone by Congress. They determine employee salary and most benefits. Congress passed laws determining the size of your pension, cost of living increases, eligibility factors and more. The union supports candidates who support federal employees. Retirees are not restricted by the Hatch Act and can campaign for candidates, solicit political contributions and run for partisan political office. In the 2023 elections in Virginia and Kentucky, AFGE retirees worked over 200 shifts contacting union households about the election. Perhaps some of you received a telephone call, answered your door, got a text message or received a postcard/letter from a volunteer union member.

In the last 2 years I worked in Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia knocking on union member household doors talking to members and their families about the candidates running in key elections.

If you are interested let your Local know that you want to be involved in election work or go to the AFGE website and find the contact information for your District Legislative and Political Organizer.

Click on “Contact Us”, “National Office Directory”, “Legislative and Political Organizers”. Send an email message to the person assigned to your state that you are interested in doing some political work.

Another activity that retirees can do is to get involved in the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council (CLC). Each state has an elected AFL-CIO President and Executive Board. Within each state are various CLC’s for geographic parts of the state. These CLCs meet periodically and are responsible for the AFL-CIO activity in each of their geographic jurisdictions. All AFL-CIO Locals within the jurisdiction of a CLC are eligible to be members. Members include a number of different unions such as AFSCME, IBEW, UAW, AFT (teachers), all the building trades, etc. AFGE Locals are members of many CLCs but don’t often don’t participate. Your local leaders are stretched thin and concentrate on representing employees in grievances and EEO complaints.

They would be glad to have a retiree member volunteer to go to AFL-CIO CLC meetings and report to

the officers of the local what’s happening with other unions in the community. I’m a delegate to the Baltimore area CLC in Maryland. I go to the meetings and inform members of other unions about the staff shortages in SSA offices and pending legislation that we are supporting. I encourage them to contact MD Senators and Congresspeople in support of AFGE issues.

When the Council had rallies in Baltimore, we informed the Baltimore CLC about the rallies and union brothers and sisters showed up to support us. I did the same.

In the last couple of weeks. I went to an event at a Baltimore Starbucks on red cup day to support employees trying to organize a union there. Last week on Black Friday I joined a picket line at the Baltimore Orioles store to support members of UNITE-HERE in their contract negotiations.

In a couple of weeks I’ll be working to load up food boxes and distribute them to laid off union members in the Baltimore area. This is a charity service that the Baltimore CLC does annually.

The CLC sponsors union night at Camden Yards. 2 years ago I volunteered to negotiate the terms of the night with Baltimore Oriole management. I met with Oriole management on a number of occasions to cement the deal. I can’t think of a better use of my time than helping out my union as a volunteer in these types of events. If you are interested, contact your Local President and volunteer to be a CLC delegate for your local.

The Alliance for Retired Americans

is the AFL-CIO retiree organization. There are chapters in 42 states. ARA’s focus is on health care, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, prescription drugs, Social Security, pensions, housing, long term care and community services. They distribute a Friday alert every week to 300,000 subscribers. You can subscribe by going to their

website at: retiredamericans.org. Check out their excellent webpage, click to find the contact information for your state chapter, join and participate. There are fact sheets on the website for numerous issues.

AFGE’s retiree member list does not always have good updated telephone numbers and email addresses for many members. If you are a retired member and are not getting either emails or text messages from AFGE, there is a good chance that we don’t have your contact information.

Communications is essential for the union to succeed. We need to be able to inform you what the union is doing and what actions you can take to help the union achieve its goals. If you aren’t hearing from us, let your union know and provide them with your current phone number and email address. AFGE sends action alerts regarding AFGE issues to subscribers. To get these action alerts, just go to the AFGE web page at AFGE.org and click on “Contact Us” and “Subscribe to Action Alerts”. Just fill out the form with your contact information and you will be informed about what the union is doing and how you can support it.

UNITY will have a retiree page in future issues. I will continue to let you know what is happening with retiree issues and how you can help us. Successful unions have members who are engaged. **Please get engaged!**

In Solidarity,

Witold Skwierczynski

President Emeritus, AFGE Council 220

C220 Retiree Committee Chair



Urgent

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The US House is threatening a vote for a full year continuing resolution for FY 24 that would freeze FY 23 spending levels.

According to the Senate, at **SSA** this would:

Worsen services millions of Americans rely on by forcing furloughs and reducing operating hours at the Social Security Administration—meaning longer wait times and less help for seniors trying to access benefits. Seniors would find it nearly impossible to get help with simple requests: from filing for retirement or disability benefits to requesting a new Social Security card to changing a last name.

This is at a time of extremely low staffing levels, a potential loss of 4000 employees, worsening employee morale, and already extreme customer service degradation.

After a decade of increased beneficiaries and Congressional underfunding,

CALL NOW

 **315-817-5437**

URGE YOUR HOUSE LAWMAKER TO PROTECT AMERICA'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET AND FULLY FUND SSA TO MEET PUBLIC DEMAND.

Special Thanks

To our C220 bargaining team Angela DiGeronimo, John Pfannenstien, and Edwin Osorio, AFGE General Committee bargainers, Chief Negotiator Rich Couture, President LaPointe leading the Contract Action Team, and sustained member engagement we were able to codify contractual gains like:

- Restoring official time back to 250 hours
- Grievances signed electronically
- The Telework eligibility MOU
- The re-negotiations of 6 key articles in the areas of: Employee Rights, Child and Elder Care, Discipline, Training, Details, and Union Management Meetings—now called Union Management Cooperation Councils
- We extended the life of our contract through October 2029

To access the new contract and for more information visit AFGEC220.org

Also in 2023 during 6 Union Management meetings C220 advocated for improvements to working conditions such as:

- Over time for TSC employees
- Hardship transfers
- Establishing a work group to fix the Bargaining Unit Employee list issues
- Union input on Improving Workplace Morale (IWM) plans
- Routine official time denials for arbitrary reasons.
- Training and mentoring problems
- Issues with new hires not offered Telework per MOU.
- Discussed the Payroll Information Exchange
- Veteran support and the need for dedicated Veteran benefit orientations
- The agency hiring at a GS-5 level and requiring bachelor's degrees.
- Position Descriptions that are outdated and need to be reflective of the actual work being performed
- Employee to manager staffing ratios being 5:1 and 6:1 in most offices. And how it relates to micromanagement
- Budget briefings
- And more!

The logo consists of the text "AFGE" stacked above "C220" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a dark blue rectangular background.



Follow AFGE C220 on Social Media!

⇒ Facebook www.facebook.com/AFGECouncil220

Union Reps :

⇒ Send invite to info@afgec220.org to join C220 Reps ONLY Facebook Page!





The American Federation of Government Employees and the 42,500 employees it represents have three asks of any leader of the Social Security Administration:

1

That the Commissioner will actively work to improve Union-Management cooperation, engage directly with Union leaders where necessary to bring real leadership to the Agency and not abdicate authority and decision-making to the Office of Labor-Management Relations.

2

That the Commissioner will work to secure full funding for the Agency, while working to improve training, employee morale, and recruitment and retention of the Agency's bargaining unit workforce.

3

That the Commissioner, with a data-driven narrative, will improve and expand the telework program, virtual service delivery, necessary technology tools, and accompanying policy modernization. The Commissioner will publicly position telework as a cost-saving and environmental protection measure that improves productivity, service delivery, and efficiency. The Commissioner will create remote work positions within the bargaining unit to increase service delivery to the public and improve employee morale and retention.

AFGE General Committee

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TELEWORK CASE STUDY

In March 2022, Social Security Field Offices returned to in-office operations with a 2 day per week telework program. As a result, Field Office employees who participate in the telework program continue to work when Field Offices are closed due to severe weather or other adverse health and safety conditions.

Prior to SSA implementing any sort of wide-scale telework trial, SSA was obligated to pay weather and safety leave to employees who were scheduled to work in the office during severe weather closures. As a result, there were often days where entire Field Offices were unable to produce work because of these closures. Even when Field Offices did not close, the public was often underserved in severe weather events, because of mass transit disruptions and closures of other community services. Telework has allowed Field Offices to boost customer service in situations where the public would not have been served otherwise.

A real world sample of how telework has been effective in maintaining customer service has been occurring in upstate New York. SSA has many New York offices situated along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, which is an area notorious for hazardous winter weather, and extended lake effect snow events. Since SSA employees' return to Field Offices in March 2022, there have been 11 days of severe weather that resulted in full-day office closures throughout 17 upstate New York offices represented by AFGE Local 3342.

Had these closures occurred in a non-telework environment, SSA and the public served by SSA's Field Offices would have lost upwards of 10,000 hours of productivity. In addition, there is a savings of approximately \$341,000 in weather and safety leave that would have been paid to employees, had telework not been available.*

With a robust and permanent telework program, SSA will be able to enhance the level of service it provides in its 1200+ Field Offices, with a long term savings that can be used to restore SSA to the staffing levels required to accomplish its mission fully.

*Case sample based on current agency staffing figures as of 12/31/2022, and agency weather closure notifications provided from 4/1/2022-12/31/2022. Hours of productivity are based on an 8 hour workday, and an assumed 20% reduction due to daily employee leave usage not attributed to weather and safety leave. Cost savings based on assumed GS-11, Step 1 salary, which represents a majority of field office positions in the 17 offices sampled.

In Loving Memory



Dana McCracken

In loving memory, we honor Dana McCracken, the esteemed president of Local 2727. Today, we gather to pay tribute to her remarkable leadership, strong female unionist and unwavering dedication to our union. Dana's legacy will forever be etched in our hearts, as she fearlessly fought for the rights and well-being of our members. Her tireless efforts and compassionate spirit have left an indelible mark on all those she touched. As we bid farewell to Dana, may she find eternal peace and serenity. Let us remember Dana McCracken as an inspiration, a guiding light, and a cherished soul who will be deeply missed.

To pay your respects to Dana you can visit:

<https://www.restlandfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Dana-Mccracken/#!/TributeWall>

Rest in Power Sister Dana!
With Love, Your AFGE Family



AFGE
C220

SSA



JOIN TODAY

Members have a say in their working conditions



1187



Member Benefits

- Insurance
- Educational Benefits
- Consumer & Technology Discounts
- Auto Benefits
- Entertainment & Travel Benefits
- Financial Benefits
- Health Benefits
- Home Benefits
- Legal Benefits

Ways to Participate

- Surveys, Meetings
- Serve as a Representative
- Contract Training
- Local & National Leadership Opportunities
- Lobbying
- Rallies, Public Speaking
- Media Outreach
- Bargaining
- Labor Management Relations

Potential member sign on rebate available



www.AFGE C220.ORG



**Have an idea, topic, question or suggestion?
Reach out to Greg Dorsey and let him know!**



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