



Union Brothers, Sisters, Siblings and SSA Employees,

As the year draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate our work together. From pushing back against management bullying to chipping away at the anti-union culture of the Office of Labor-Management Employee Relations (OLMER), AFGE Council 220 has faced challenges head-on and has seen the payoff for our hard work in 2022.

We have been able to create pathways for much-needed change at SSA because of our concerted efforts to stay on message, to reach the right decision-makers, and keep our focus where it matters – on the employees.

Some of the highlights of our year:

- By summer's end, Council 220 continued to build on relationships with our congressional leaders. Union leaders and our legislative team, including AFGE staff member Jeff Cruz, led us through the development of a [new legislative agenda](#). Jeff and C220 2nd VP, Sherry Jackson, continue to reach out to Congressman Larson, Chair of the House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, members of his staff, and other key federal lawmakers, for support on our issues.
- In the early fall, Council 220 undertook a [research study](#) to better quantify the challenges employees face in the office. We dove deep into morale and emerged from the study with data to support our demands of the Agency. Council 220 National Health and Safety team, led by Howard Egerman and Jennifer Ramirez-Serrano, and other SSA Union General Committee (GC) and Council 220 Executive Committee members have met with management in a series of meetings to define the reality of our work lives. Working with [Workplace Bullying Institute](#) founder, Gary Naime, our union team proposed to the agency the creation of a national workplace morale taskforce; a fully trained team to serve as an emotional triage for employees and an educational resource for management to deal head on with our mounting and historic attrition crisis.
- Amad Ali has led our C220 Veteran Committee to create the [Veteran Checklist](#) and continues to meet with agency heads to ensure our veterans are well cared for in the onboarding process and throughout their career.

- In October, Council 220 led in partnership with Social Security Works and AFGE National to host a virtual [town hall](#) to highlight our issues. This virtual meeting gave us a platform to speak directly to lawmakers and their staff, Agency leaders, employees, and the public at large about the morale crisis impacting our employees. It received important media coverage in [Government Executive](#) and [Federal News Network](#).
- By November, Council 220 took a leading role, along with the rest of the SSA Union GC, to host a [union rally](#) outside SSA Headquarters; demanding that employee rights be taken seriously, that OLMER be reformed, and most importantly, the bargaining unit be treated with dignity and respect. It also received critical media coverage in [Government Executive](#), [Federal News Network](#), [Federal Times](#), and with other national and local media outlets. You can view pictures from the rally [here](#)!
- Throughout the year Council 220 leaders used their voices in the media to echo your views. Some of the recent highlights include [Anita Autrey](#), President of AFGE Local 1923, who was published in the Baltimore Sun calling for reform at the Agency. [Valerie Langley](#), Secretary of AFGE Local 3509, was also part of a story highlighting the public employee crisis at all levels of government. Likewise, President of Local 3571, [Amad Ali's](#) voice carried our issue from the Midwest.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of your union leaders and member support, we look forward to continued success working with the next OLMER leader, Katherine Hannah, as Joseph Sullivan leaves his tenure with SSA in January.

While these gains feel great in the moment, our work is not finished. The employee morale and attrition crisis are still a very real threat to employees and the public we serve and will remain our paramount concern.

Looking ahead to the New Year, in January, we will be negotiating with the Agency on two critical topics. New York Regional Vice President, Angela Digeronimo, and her team will lead Council 220 in negotiating the preservation of telework for the employees we represent, and I will join the GC in negotiating the parameters of a much-needed retention pay incentive for employees.

In February, we will hold our annual AFGE Legislative Conference. Our local leaders and representatives will take to Capitol Hill lobbying for the respect and dignity all federal workers and the public deserve. We will continue calling for an increase in funding and staffing, the confirmation of an Agency head with a vision that is focused on taking care of its workforce, an OLMER that collaborates and compromises, and much-needed technology upgrades that allow us to do our jobs.

By the end of spring, we will be sitting down to negotiate a limited reopening of our contract on six significant articles: employee rights, training, child and elder care, discipline, details, and

union-management meetings. Leading into this negotiation, the Union will be using every tool available to us to demonstrate the strength of our membership and the power of our message.

2022 has been a year of transition, change, and key wins that have us moving in the right direction. While our fight may be far from over, in 2023, I am committed to continuing our journey toward progress. Most of all, I am looking forward to serving alongside all of you, with great pride and distinction, in every endeavor, big or small, to protect and fight for our rights to a fair, equitable, healthy, and safe work environment.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year everyone!

In Solidarity,

Jessica Lapointe
President, AFGE Council 220

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