

Proposed Contract Update – Wednesday, March 10, 2010:

Negotiations between AFGE and the Social Security Administration have resumed after a hiatus of several weeks, and SSA management is offering more proposals that would adversely affect bargaining unit employees and their families (especially those with young children).

Imagine your four-year-old wakes up in the middle of the night with a fever of 103. You do everything you can for the youngster, but by seven a.m., the child is still very sick.

You call the office and request emergency leave so you can take your son or daughter to the hospital or family doctor. ***That's when the situation gets much worse!*** Your supervisor denies your request for leave, saying the agency's work takes priority over everything else – even a very sick child who's not getting any better.

“That's exactly what SSA management has proposed at the bargaining table,” said Witold Skwierczynski, the Union's Chief Negotiator. “They actually believe work is more important than family – but I have no doubts supervisors and managers would still approve each other's leave requests while bargaining unit employees suffer.”

The Union's position is that all requests for emergency leave (especially those involving sick children and other relatives) be granted without question or hesitation.

“It's very possible that an employee's elderly parent could be close to their death and the request for emergency leave will be denied,” Skwierczynski added. “This is a situation the Union wants to deal with fairly during contract negotiations.”

The agency's chief negotiator is Ken Powell. If you would like to contact him directly and offer your comments or suggestions about management's proposals, he can be reached at Ken.Powell@ssa.gov.