

## **Contract Update – Tuesday, April 13, 2010**

**Contract negotiations between AFGE and the Social Security Administration resumed on April 13 with agency representatives proposing a change that would greatly disadvantage probationary employees.**

**Dana Duggins, a member of the Union’s bargaining team, was appalled at SSA’s latest idea and was very candid in her opinion:**

**“Their proposal in Article 33 shows them to be nothing but heartless,” she said. “They want to fire probationary employees with no notice at all, instead of giving them two weeks as they’re required to do now. This is just ruthless.”**

**The Union posed this question during contract talks: does SSA want to be able to fire an employee at 4:44 p.m. – just a minute before their shift ends, with no other warning to that person?**

**The agency’s response: “yes!”**

**Management also rejected the idea of putting those employees in lower level positions, even though the agency has spent thousands of dollars training them and they haven’t had time to look for another job.**

**The Union suggested positive changes to Article 34, which deals with Workers Compensation, but SSA wasn’t interested in any of them. Management also responded to our proposal that AFGE have a much more meaningful role in Contracting Out decisions and procedures.**

**“Don’t you think this is overkill?” asked Ralph Patinella, a member of Social Security’s bargaining team who is known for his sarcasm during contract talks.**

**“The Obama Administration wants more work put back into agencies, to be done by federal employees,” said Steve Kofahl, a Union negotiator, “when the functions are inherently governmental or critical to the agency mission.”**

**Social Security also thinks management should have total control in selecting technical mentors.**

**“They said they want to be able to pick the ‘best and the brightest,’” said Debbie Fredericksen of AFGE. “We know they’ll wind up choosing their favorites, whether that person is qualified or not.”**

**She also pointed out that once an employee is selected to be a mentor, they may never be able to get out of that job.**

**“Under their proposal, if the agency wants to keep you there, you’ll have to stay,” Fredericksen emphasized. “You would have no say in the matter.”**

**Bargaining unit employees who would like to comment on the agency’s proposals should contact Ralph Patinella at [Ralph.Patinella@ssa.gov](mailto:Ralph.Patinella@ssa.gov).**