

AFGE for

Restoring Rights,

the math is simple

SSA 

Gaining Respect,

A GOOD CONTRACT
+ GREAT EMPLOYEES
EXCELLENT SERVICE

EMPLOYEES Preserving Social Security

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Contract Update—May 7, 2010

Contract Bargaining Enters Critical Stage Contract negotiations between AFGE and the Social Security Administration recently ended their initial phase, and now both sides enter a critical juncture where there should be more give-and-take as well as good faith bargaining to narrow our differences. Unfortunately, we saw very little movement from management in discussing Article 13 (Parking and Transportation) and Article 9 (Health and Safety).

We talked about Article 24 (Grievances) and Article 25 (Arbitration) near the end of the first phase. The Union wants to restore fairness to the process while management wants to make it more difficult for employees and their AFGE representatives. Short time frames and restrictive rules would keep many employees from getting the help they deserve after they've been harmed. The agency's proposals to add burdensome procedures and increase costs would be detrimental to employees and the Union that represents them.

Management complained that if AFGE's Article 13 proposal is adopted, highly-paid management officials could lose the free parking spaces they had seized -- often at the expense of bargaining unit employees -- and which they are not entitled to under Federal regulations. They also want to freeze transit subsidies at just \$60/month for most of us. Management has also admitted they recently raised the subsidy rate in Washington, D.C. only because they were forced to do it by the White House and AFGE.

The agency wants to avoid any real negotiations on these subjects with the Union, Management officials want total control of current and future programs and they don't trust employees to be honest. All of these have been recurring themes during negotiations.

AFGE has proposed Union-management committees and labor-management forums to deal with critical workplace issues at all levels (local, regional, and national), but there is great resistance from the Social Security Administration. In fact, the agency has made it quite clear that it does not want anything to do with labor-management forums or pre-decisional involvement by the Union in the next contract. This directly contradicts President Obama's Executive Order which he signed last December.

Contract Negotiations resume May 11-20, 2010.

Please look for *daily* updates on our contract website, www.mycontract2009.org.

When the Union and SSA management return to the bargaining table on May 11, we will again discuss Article 9 and then move onto other important subjects, including Article 31(Time and Leave). We will keep you posted, but we also need your support to succeed. On non-duty time, please check our contract negotiation website regularly.

AFGE SSA GENERAL COMMITTEE, AFL-CIO

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