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SSA 

Gaining Respect,

A GOOD CONTRACT
+ GREAT EMPLOYEES
EXCELLENT SERVICE

EMPLOYEES Preserving Social Security

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Contract Update—June 11, 2010

SSA Commissioner Declines to Meet with AFGE to Implement President Obama's Executive Order

President Obama issued Executive Order 13522, "Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Service Delivery" on December 9, 2009. Its goal is to improve labor-management relations, involve employees through their Unions in decision-making, improve the effectiveness and productivity of the Federal Government, and measure progress of providing better government service.

AFGE submitted contract proposals to SSA that provide for the establishment of SSA/AFGE labor/management forums and pre-decisional involvement by employees at all levels of the agency in accordance with the President's Executive Order. A meeting with Commissioner Michael J. Astrue and other SSA leaders was requested by AFGE to develop the implementation plan.

SSA negotiators rejected the Union's detailed labor-management forums proposal and the Commissioner failed to respond to AFGE's request for a meeting. Instead, Social Security's Office of Labor Management and Employee Relations (OLMER) unilaterally scheduled a meeting that would have marginalized AFGE's involvement in the planning process and in the forums themselves by inviting nine representatives of Unions that represent 4% of SSA employees and only three AFGE representatives, even though AFGE represents *over 96% of all bargaining unit employees* at SSA.

The National Council Working Group established by the President's Executive Order rejected and returned the SSA implementation plan that had been developed without AFGE involvement and demanded that SSA produce a revised plan. The agency re-submitted its previously-rejected plan with slight revisions and it was - of course! - rejected once again by the Working Group. Although AFGE requested a meeting to collaborate on the

contents of an acceptable plan, SSA refused to agree to such a meeting. The Social Security Administration is now the *only* large Federal agency without a certified plan, and it had until June 8 to correct the outstanding deficiencies. Our repeated requests to schedule an SSA/AFGE meeting go unanswered by Mr. Astrue.

Right now, we all need to speak with one voice and let Commissioner Astrue know that he needs to personally respond to AFGE's requests to meet with him to create a certified plan that satisfies the requirements of President Obama's Executive Order. We need to be involved with SSA in making decisions about new technology, work processes, policies, staffing allocations, employee compensation, and other matters.

You can assist in changing Commissioner Astrue's mind about meeting with AFGE expeditiously to create workable labor-management forums between AFGE and SSA so we can both improve working conditions and improve SSA services. Contact Commissioner Astrue directly and demand that he drop his resistance to improved AFGE-management communications through forums.

**Please send your message to
Michael.J.Astrue@ssa.gov, with
a copy to witold1@attglobal.net.**

**Thank you, and together we *will* make
Social Security a better place to work!**

James Marshall, AFGE General Committee
Spokesperson

Witold Skwierczynski, AFGE Chief Negotiator

AFGE SSA GENERAL COMMITTEE, AFL-CIO

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