

## Social Security *Still* Ignoring President's Executive Order

It's been more than eight months since President Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13522, and high-ranking officials within Social Security continue to ignore that directive.

The EO's purpose was a simple one: to involve employees through their Unions in the decision-making process, improve labor-management relations, improve the Federal Government's productivity, and measure the progress of providing better service.

"It's obvious to me that Commissioner Michael Astrue and members of his staff have no interest at all in implementing this order," said Witold Skwierczynski, AFGE's Chief Negotiator for the ongoing contract talks. "They are deliberately and defiantly ignoring a Presidential directive.

"Fifty of 51 agency forum plans have been approved. Social Security is still the only Federal agency without a certified plan."

AFGE President John Gage recently sent a letter to the National Council Workgroup, which was established to oversee the progress being made on the Executive Order.

In that letter, Gage pointed out that SSA submitted another plan in July to the workgroup which fails to meet the requirement of the EO. He urged the committee to reject the agency's latest proposal.

"(It) requires each agency head to submit an implementation plan in consultation with Union representatives," Gage wrote. "No such consultation has occurred with AFGE...despite the fact that AFGE represents 96% of employees who are in bargaining units in SSA."

He also pointed out the many flaws in Social Security's latest plan, calling parts of it "unclear and vague" and "insufficiently specific."

"It appears that SSA is not interested in participating in a balanced forums process as envisioned by the Executive Order," Gage wrote to the workgroup. "The plan as submitted is deficient in many areas. The worst aspect of the SSA plan is their absolute refusal to meet with AFGE to discuss and collaborate on AFGE-SSA forums plan and structure.

"Such refusal indicates a reluctance to deal with AFGE in an even handed manner and a strategy to dictate a unilateral implementation plan for AFGE. Such an approach does not auger well for success."

Skwierczynski and Gage urge all SSA employees to contact Commissioner Astrue and demand that he immediately contact the Union and include AFGE in the labor-management process, as required by the Executive Order.

Commissioner Astrue can be reached at [Michael.J.Astrue@ssa.gov](mailto:Michael.J.Astrue@ssa.gov) and a copy of those messages should be sent to [witold1@attglobal.net](mailto:witold1@attglobal.net).