

AFGE for



EMPLOYEES

Restoring Rights,

Gaining Respect,

Preserving Social Security

*the math is simple*

A GOOD CONTRACT  
+ GREAT EMPLOYEES  
EXCELLENT SERVICE

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# CONTRACT UPDATE BARGAINING BEGINS!

December 7, 2009

Officials from the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) met last week to begin discussions on contract proposals. Both sides expressed their objectives and concerns, with the Union's chief negotiator outlining the results of a survey which showed that many members of SSA's bargaining unit are unhappy with their working conditions.

"Employees responded that stress was their number one, most important issue," said Witold Skwierczynski. "Over one-half of the respondents want the award system revamped. They also indicated that the current appraisal system is unfair, biased, and does not accurately assess employee job performance."

A lack of promotional opportunities and stagnation in grade were also mentioned. "SSA employees bitterly criticized the widespread practice of using non-competitive hiring authority like FCIP (the Federal Career Intern Program) to hire management friends, relatives and associates to SSA positions, rather than giving current qualified employees a chance at getting promoted," Skwierczynski told the gathering.

Ken Powell, the agency's chief negotiator, stressed public service and "we will not ignore

our management rights." He went on to list efficiency and flexibility as two of the three "key items" that should be discussed during contract negotiations.

"Lastly...is our commitment to our employees," Powell said. "We want to provide a quality work environment for our employees as reasonably as we can."

"I believe that statement says it all," Skwierczynski remarked after the day's session was over. "Management puts employees last on their list of 'key items.' That should clearly tell every member of the bargaining unit where they stand with this agency."

"I would suggest that anyone who's offended by Mr. Powell's comment should email him and express their thoughts in a professional manner. He can be reached at [Ken.Powell@ssa.gov](mailto:Ken.Powell@ssa.gov)."

More Union/agency discussions are planned for the month of December and AFGE will keep employees up-to-date on contract negotiations. For a transcript of the Union's opening statement from Mr. Skwierczynski, please go to [www.mycontract2009.org](http://www.mycontract2009.org).

**AFGE GENERAL COMMITTEE, AFL-CIO**

[www.mycontract2009.org](http://www.mycontract2009.org)