

Contract Update - January 25, 2010

Employee Rights Under Attack!

As contract negotiations continue between AFGE and the Social Security Administration, it's becoming more apparent that agency officials want to further reduce employee rights.

Here are just a few of SSA's proposals:

- The agency wants to be able to establish and/or modify its policies regarding the records it keeps on employees, without notice to the Union or the employees. The current contract doesn't allow for that, but if this proposal is adopted, it would surely lead to widespread abuse by unscrupulous managers and supervisors. In other words, if they don't like you – they could create a folder, put any information they want in it, and there's *nothing* you or the Union could do about it.
- Social Security wants to eliminate all contract language that allows employees to review, receive copies, and comment on material in their Official Personnel Folders. Instead, SSA wants to establish and/or modify agency policies without notice to the Union or employees and simply "advise" employees about accessing and obtaining copies of records in the electronic OPF. This would allow managers to place anything in your OPF without rebuttal, which could adversely affect your ability to get promoted and/or hired by another Federal agency.
- The agency wants to prevent the Union from assigning its attorneys, representatives, staff and Local officials who are not current SSA employees from meeting with employees during duty time and accessing SSA facilities. This

seriously interferes with the Union's ability to fulfill its statutory representational responsibilities.

- SSA hopes to eliminate all contract language that entitles employees to emergency payments if the agency fails to pay them in a timely manner.
- Social Security also wants the right to unilaterally declare any SSA controlled space a "no smoking" area. This would apply to all SSA leased and owned premises, which would include parking lots and employee vehicles parked in SSA owned or leased parking lots.

We understand that many employees will find these proposals shocking or even unbelievable. Employees should always remember that when the agency makes a proposal, it's meant to benefit management and NOT you, the employee!

The agency has made a number of other proposals and you can read about them at www.mycontract2009.org. The Union's Chief Negotiator, Witold Skwierczynski, has written a detailed analysis of management's proposals. It is on the same website under "Breaking News" (dated January 6, 2010).

The Union will do everything it can to keep management's proposed draconian changes out of the contract and improve employee rights. But this will require bargaining unit employees to keep the pressure on agency negotiators. You can let them know how you feel about their proposals by emailing Ken Powell, SSA's Chief negotiator, at Ken.Powell@ssa.gov.

