



# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

For current and retired government workers and their families since 1933 • American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

July/August 2013

Vol. LXXX, No 4



Highlights from the 2002 Leadership Meeting in Chicago



**The Meeting Planning Team** is a diverse group of members from the NEC, Bargaining Councils, HRC and Locals from around the country.

**Kneeling:**

- Thad Wallace
- Brian DeWyngaert
- Shawn Moran
- Roberta Sharbutt
- Troy Tingey

**Middle:**

- Dwayne Person
- Dorothy James
- Augusta Thomas
- Alma Lee
- Caniesha Washington

**Standing:**

- Cynthia Ennis
- Eugene Hudson Jr.
- Ron Demichelli
- George McCubbin III
- Frank Rock

- Gerry Swanke
- Donny Boyte
- Marilyn Wiley
- Everett Kelley
- Don Burrell
- Peter Skazin

- Gabrielle Martin
- J. David Cox Sr.
- Carolyn Federoff
- Beverly Wilmer
- Roy Flores
- Patrick Kearns

- Vicky Taylor
- Tim Traylor (not pictured)

## National Leadership Meeting – September 2013

### Purpose Statement

*To forge a strategy big enough to overcome the attacks and win the future of our choice by committing to:*

- Building on the power of the union
- Engaging new leaders and
- Energizing and activating current and potential members

*(continued on page 9)*

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## A Message from AFGE's National President J. David Cox Sr.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am writing to you as I prepare for two "telephone town halls" tonight and I've got a good idea what's on everybody's mind: furloughs, pay freezes, next year's budget, downgrades, and when is all this going to stop? When are we going to be able to focus on doing our jobs rather than worrying about how to pay the bills? When are the politicians going to tire of bullying and attacking federal employees and either find another target or finally start doing what's right for this country?

Those are the questions on my mind. The NEC is here in Washington this week, and we've been focusing on strategy and mobilization on all these issues. We're also just coming off a planning session for our September Leadership Meeting in Orlando, Fla. that I'm really optimistic about. I think that meeting will be an excellent chance for all of us to come together around a good plan for moving forward that we all can get behind because it will be the product of real collaboration. All of the voices and interests and perspectives of AFGE should be represented and will be reflected in our work. I know some people are reluctant to do strategic planning on such a large scale, but we've got it set up so that there will be genuine conversation, genuine sharing of ideas, genuine and substantive and serious planning and resource allocation.

***We won't be successful if we're just putting out fires all the time, playing defense. Real success will involve playing offense, having explicit goals and a plan for reaching them. I urge you to make plans to attend. We need everybody to be involved, we want your help; we want your full engagement.***

All the departments in the national office have been busy this week reporting on their activities: The legislative and political staff has been on Capitol Hill and in congressional districts working tirelessly on next year's budget, an end to the pay freeze, protection of retirement and health care and keeping privatization and DoD downsizing at bay. Communications has AFGE everywhere on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube, in the papers and on TV and radio making our case on all these issues and encouraging the membership to become active. The General Counsel's Office successfully argued a case that

prevents the Department of Veterans Affairs from stopping the investigation of unfair labor practice charges by Title 38 employees. And I'm happy to announce that we hired a new director of Field Services/Education: Dave Cann, an attorney with extensive experience in collective bargaining and labor law. He is a terrific addition to our staff and I am very happy we were able to lure him away from the practice of law. Dave and his staff in FSED put together the toolkit for MSPB appeals of furloughs, which is our best bet so far in getting them cancelled administratively.

And amid all this, I have to remind you not only to be in constant touch with your lawmakers about all these issues, but also to ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE because new members are our lifeblood, there's strength in numbers and Lord Almighty, we need strength to fight these battles.

In solidarity,

### AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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## What is AFGE Doing to Fight for You?

Since March 20 AFGE has launched an aggressive campaign to protect our members from the unprecedented attacks being waged in Washington on federal workers.

During the summer, AFGE has and will continue to engage our members in actions dedicated to stopping the sequester, ending the pay freeze and stopping the VA downgrades.

Thousands of AFGE members have already mobilized. Thousands of AFGE members have called or met with their member of Congress on these issues. We know the only way these policies will change is if we all come together and do something to stop them.

As many of you already know DoD sent furlough notices in May and up to 680,000 employees could see a 20 percent pay cut over the next 11 weeks.

Only Congress and the president have the power to end the sequester. AFGE lobbyists and members continue to tell lawmakers what being furloughed means to them and their agency's mission. Our veteran members have spoken up about their service to the country and how furloughs are going to hurt hundreds of thousands of veterans while impacting our ability to support current troops.

AFGE has set up the following dedicated phone lines members are using to call their congressional offices on the days they've been furloughed:

- **Furloughs: 1-888-775-3148**
- **Pay freeze: 1-888-907-8362**
- **VA downgrades: 1-888-907-5171**

Members have been telling their elected officials how they are unable to serve the American people that day because Congress is unwilling to stop this madness and end the sequester.



*Federal Dollars Campaign (top graphic) and furlough poster (bottom). Find out more and order your federal dollars and furlough poster at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org). Click on the "Stop Furloughs" sign.*

# FURLOUGHS HURT US ALL

**Our Local Economy**

**Our Troops**

**Civilian Defense Workers & Their Families**

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY  
LAND AND MARITIME  
P.O. BOX 3990  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43218-3990

May 29, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR PATRICIA VIERS

SUBJECT: Notice of Proposed Furlough Due to Reduction in Agency Funds

This memorandum provides notice that the Defense Logistics Agency proposes to furlough you no earlier than 30 days from receipt of this notice.



*AFGE members rally in Colorado Springs to end furloughs*

To learn more about what's being done in this critical fight for federal employees, log on to [www.AFGE.org](http://www.AFGE.org) and click on the red stop sign.

## AFGE Turns Up the Heat on VA Regional Director Michael Moreland



AFGE 3rd District NVP Keith Hill interviews with Cox Media Group Washington Correspondent Scott MacFarlane regarding the Legionnaires' disease outbreak in Pittsburgh

Since learning of the Legionnaires' disease outbreak in the Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System, AFGE has taken the Department of Veterans Affairs to task over its handling of the outbreak. In the months after the outbreak was acknowledged by the VA, the union has learned that five veterans' deaths have been linked to their contracting Legionnaires' disease at a Pittsburgh VA medical facility. Veterans and hospital staff were not notified of increased concerns of high levels of legionella in the water systems until more than a year after trouble began. The agency's Office of Inspector General released its report on the investigation of the outbreak in April 2013, citing the VA's failure to follow its own procedures. In response to the report, AFGE released a statement drawing attention to the lack of management accountability as the situation unfolded.

"We believe the report does not go far enough in determining why hospital management and VISN leadership, to include VISN 4 Director Michael Moreland, did not do more once they discovered the problem back in 2011," said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. "The report goes into great detail about the function of the water system and the history of Legionnaires' disease but it leaves us wondering, given all that the VA knows about legionella, why weren't our veterans and healthcare workers fully protected from this outbreak?"

AFGE 3rd District National Vice President Keith Hill added, "We've been sounding the alarm for years about Director Moreland's poor leadership and the retaliatory

actions taken against VA employee whistleblowers under his watch. The VA needs to take a hard look at its management ranks and weed out those who are not acting in the best interest of our veterans."

Following the OIG report, news outlets began to report that VA officials in the Pittsburgh region received performance bonuses during the time of the outbreak. AFGE leaders expressed outrage over the awards, particularly Director Moreland's receipt of the Presidential Distinguished Rank Award, which included a \$63,000 bonus.

"This is absolutely unbelievable. We are truly at a loss as to why the VA continues to reward those in its leadership ranks who clearly are not operating in the best interest of our veterans," said Cox. "But we've seen this time and time again at the VA: front-line employees are forced to do more with less, while agency executives are pulling in bonuses despite mismanagement, retaliation and intimidation of employees under their watch."

After learning about the bonuses, AFGE was notified by union activists in the Pittsburgh area that television advertisements were running on local stations with Director Moreland as the face of the VA. The union filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the VA asking the agency to provide information on the total cost of the ads, documentation on the need for such advertising and what outcome the agency is seeking as a result of the project.

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“It seems to be one scandal after another when it comes to Mr. Moreland,” said Hill. “What does it say to the families of the victims who died after contracting Legionnaires’ disease at a VA facility that the man who oversees that facility is starring in TV ads promoting the VA? It’s an outrage.”

“Our veterans depend on us to provide the best care possible in return for their service to our nation,” said

AFGE National VA Council President Alma Lee. “When the VA diverts precious healthcare dollars away from patient care for TV ads that feature controversial agency officials, it calls into question the agency’s commitment to our nation’s heroes while forcing doctors, nurses and hospital staff to do more with less.”

AFGE requested the VA respond to its FOIA request by June 19. Given the continuous controversies surrounding Director Moreland and his years of mismanagement, the union has called for his resignation.

## Head-to-Tail **Pet Savings and Services!**

Check out the **head-to-tail pet savings and services** available to union families.

- **INSURANCE DEALS**  
Save up to 15% on pet insurance plans.
- **VET DISCOUNTS**  
Save 25% with over 2,500 participating vets nationwide.
- **EVERYDAY SAVINGS**  
Get 10% discounts on pet food, toys, supplies, medications and more.
- **SPECIAL SERVICES** Save up to 30% on pet sitting, boarding, grooming, daycare and more.
- **HEALTH and SAFETY TIPS** Get FREE advice on diet, dental care and other preventive care tips.



For more information visit: [AFGE.org](http://AFGE.org)

# Domestic Violence is a Worker Issue



## Domestic Violence Manual

AFGE Women's and Fair Practices Departments • 80 F St. N.W., 11th Floor • Washington, D.C. 20001  
phone 202.639.6417 • fax 202.639.6490 • TDD 202.639.6474 • [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

The Women's and Fair Practices departments have taken an aggressive stance on interposing ourselves into the discussion about Domestic Violence. We have:

**1 Educated the membership:** A pamphlet and manual were created specifically with accessibility in mind, using a design that provides the most important information in a clear and concise manner, while maintaining topical relevance. Members and others will be able to easily identify the steps to staying safe in the workplace and

AFGE's role in that process.

**2 Changed the conversation:** In the current political climate, the cash bottom line is too often the motivator; with the issue of domestic violence, safety should be the utmost concern.

**3 Extended awareness:** Women's and Fair Practices is committed to making domestic violence awareness something far more than only one month out of the year. We are in the process of developing more domestic violence informational packages and awareness letters.

**4 Supported the political process:** AFGE will work to support legislation that protects workers who cope with domestic violence. We will work to build coalitions, and work within existing coalitions, to ensure that all domestic violence survivors – male or female – who find themselves in this situation have a voice.

**5 Advocated for inclusion:** Domestic violence is a safety issue, not a partisan issue. Everyone should be protected from violence and it doesn't matter if you are male, female, gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian or transgender.

As a leading union in the fight for civil rights, human rights and workers' rights, AFGE will not ignore the plight of our members who are victims of domestic violence. We recognize that we are in a position to make unique and important contributions to efforts to change the laws to end domestic violence.

You can find out more information regarding domestic violence in the Women's and Fair Practices Department's "A Handbook on Domestic Violence" manual. Go to [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) to purchase online.

Find the latest on social media communication tips at [afgecommtraining.com](http://afgecommtraining.com)



### AFGE COMM SQUAD





## Connect Online with the WFP Diversity Week

During this year's Women's and Fair Practices departments' Diversity Week Aug. 17 – 23, AFGE will be amplifying its social media presence. We invite participants to join the conversation online as we highlight activities, members and union fellowship through the Web. WFP Diversity Week will feature the 2nd annual Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation (Y.O.U.N.G.) Training Summit, the Human Rights Training Conference and AFGE's first Pride Summit, which will address labor issues affecting our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender members and their allies.

Each event will be represented on Facebook and Twitter. You can RSVP to the trainings by visiting the AFGE Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/afgeunion](http://www.facebook.com/afgeunion). We also

encourage you to 'like' our young workers Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/YoungAFGE](http://www.facebook.com/YoungAFGE). If you're on Twitter please follow AFGE at [www.twitter.com/afgenational](http://www.twitter.com/afgenational) to get the latest updates on conference events as they happen. Use the following Twitter hashtags for each event in order to keep up with the conversation: #AFGEYOUNGSummit, #HRT2013 and #AFGEPrideSummit.

We will be uploading lots of photos and event information throughout the week so attendees and non-attendees can keep up with what is sure to be a great conference week. Join the conversation online! If you have any questions regarding our social media efforts please contact the AFGE Communications Department at 202.639.6419 or [afgecommsquad@gmail.com](mailto:afgecommsquad@gmail.com).



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## AFGE HUD Local Leads Boston Coalition in Protest of Sequestration



Brian Brousseau, president of United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers Local 33 supporting the AFGE rally

**A**FGE Housing and Urban Development Local 3258 hosted community groups, other unions and AFGE locals in May to protest sequestration and corporate tax loop holes outside the O’Neill Federal Building in Boston. Since sequestration budget cuts began, the effects have been evident in the community.

“On April 1, I was laid off my job of 16 years,” Roxanne Eddington-Wilde, a former planner at Boston anti-poverty agency ABCD, told the crowd of more than 100 demonstrators. “When wealthy air travelers faced

flight delays, Congress rushed to end cuts to air traffic controllers, but they’ve been deadly silent on cuts where it really hurts: Meals on Wheels for seniors, Head Start for kids, fuel assistance to help families keep warm, and jobs and housing to keep people afloat.”

Another speaker, Karen Carson of the Massachusetts Alliance of Housing and Urban Development Tenants, who is disabled and found a home with HUD rental assistance, noted that nearly 4,000 Massachusetts families will be forced to stay longer in shelters or on the streets due to cuts in HUD rental assistance affecting 140,000 families nationwide. Other speakers included Brian Brousseau, representing roofers at the Boston Housing Authority laid off due to sequestration, and Jen Springer, representing Head Start workers notified that school was closing three weeks early and starting two weeks late in the fall.

After the rally, participants marched to the nearby offices of Verizon, Citigroup and Bank of America, which have paid no federal taxes in recent years. “It’s time that corporations in this country start paying their fair share and stop trying to balance our budget on the backs of the middle class,” said Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Steve Tolman. “Today we rally for an end to corporate greed and to ensure vital programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are protected for the millions of working families who have paid into and rely on them.”

AFGE Local 3258 joined the Budget for All Coalition more than a year ago, fighting against a “cuts only” approach to balancing the federal budget.

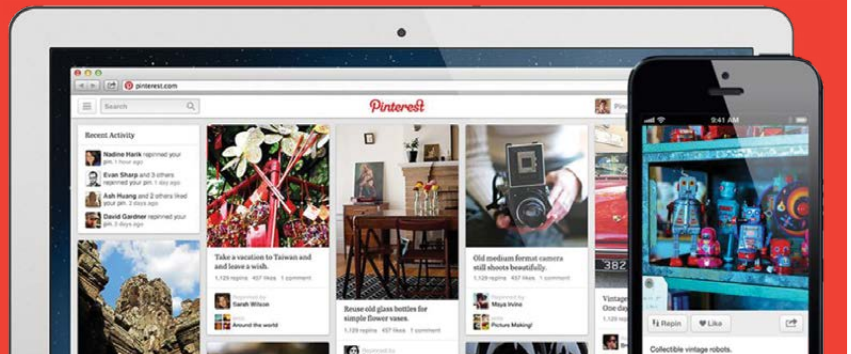
## Social Media Corner: Are you on



**A**FGE has expanded its social media presence into the world of Pinterest. This social media site functions as an online scrapbook that allows you to “pin” photos and videos on the Web. With this tool you can organize these “pins” into categories and have an online record of your favorite images and videos.

Pinterest is a great way to share visual content related to recipes, special events, hobbies, labor organizing and other topics. Pinterest allows users to comment on others’ content, and share photos and videos they find most interesting through “repinning.” AFGE has used this tool to highlight photos from the National Nurses Week campaign, No Knives on Planes initiative, voter suppression project and AFGE

ad campaigns. You can visit AFGE’s online scrapbook at [www.pinterest.com/afge](http://www.pinterest.com/afge). If you have questions about Pinterest or how to launch your local’s social media program contact the AFGE Communications Department at 202.639.6419 or send an email to [afgecommsquad@gmail.com](mailto:afgecommsquad@gmail.com).





(from page 1)

## National Leadership Meeting – September 2013



**Tired of:**  
 • Pay Freezes? • Furloughs? • RIFs? • Agency Cuts? • Sequestration?

### ATTEND THE LEADERSHIP MEETING!

*Help figure out AFGE's strategy to win a better future*

**T**hese are trying times to be a federal employee. The attacks on our pay, our benefits, our jobs, even our way of life, have been relentless. The only thing worse than the battle we're waging now is being caught unprepared for the next fight – and we all know that it's just around the corner.

That's why we need a battle plan. We must come together now and forge a strategy that's big enough to overcome these attacks and win the future of our choice.

**With that in mind, AFGE will convene a special National Leadership Meeting in September in Orlando.** The goal of the week-long conference is to develop a unified vision that will carry the union through the next decade.

"We are more powerful today than we were 10 years ago, and that has everything to do with the vision we set at our last National Leadership Meeting," President Cox said. "Now is the time to set the direction for the next 10 years."

### NEXT GENERATION OF AFGE LEADERS

#### – WE WANT YOU IN ORLANDO!

This is a critical time for the union because we are transitioning from this generation of leaders to the next.

That means it's more important than ever that we engage and energize existing and potential members who can take over the reins as our current leaders step down in the years ahead.

We would like to see every local send representatives to the meeting. Other groups within AFGE should be represented as well: bargaining councils, the National Executive Council, the Human Rights committee, the Hispanic Coalition, and occupational groups such as firefighters, nurses and law enforcement officers.

"To make this a success, we need to hear from everyone throughout this great organization," President Cox concluded.

### LEADERSHIP MEETING PURPOSE STATEMENT

*To forge a strategy big enough to overcome the attacks and win the future of our choice by committing to:*

- Build on the power of the union
- Engage new leaders and
- Energize and activate current and potential members

### MORE INFORMATION

**What:** National Leadership Meeting 2013

**Where:** Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Orlando, FL

**When:** September 24–26, 2013 with travel on the 23rd and 27th. Check-in is on the 23rd.

**Register** online at [www.afge.org/NationalLeadership](http://www.afge.org/NationalLeadership)  
The cost is \$200 per person.

**Deadline** to register is August 23, 2013.

Hotel room cost is \$97 plus tax and fees.

## AFGE BOP Local 506 Granted First Department of Justice Sexual Harassment Class-Action Suit

Female employees at Coleman Federal Correctional Complex finally received the justice they deserved when AFGE Bureau of Prisons Local 506 was recently granted the first class-action sexual harassment case at the Department of Justice.

More than 360 women at FCC Coleman in Florida were subjected to daily harassment by male prisoners at the facility while management repeatedly failed to take action. Female staff members, including some managers, filed reports of sexual harassment that were later shredded by management. In cases where action against inmates was taken, the disciplinary hearing officer would sanction inmates for as little as two days instead of the 30-day sanctions required by BOP.

There were more than 400 documented incident reports of sexual misconduct toward female teachers, therapists, correctional officers, commissary workers and food service and recreational employees. "We had so much documentation that the Department of Justice finally recognized there was a major problem at the prison," said Joe Rojas, president of AFGE Local 506. "DOJ ruled in favor of the union indicating that the BOP could no longer

turn a blind eye to the problem," he continued. The hostile work environment and negligence by management prompted female employees to take matters into their own hands by wearing smocks on top of their uniforms. They even hired an outside vendor to make uniformed smocks to avoid being harassed.

Harassment claims had been disregarded for years until the union took aggressive action to file the case. As a result, BOP is now mandated to cooperate with the union to change their policies. "If it weren't for all of the women who were brave enough to come forward we wouldn't be here today. We all worked together to make this happen," said Rojas.

The local would like to see inmates accused of sexual harassment registered as sex offenders and charged with a sexual crime. "This is a learned behavior and if it is tolerated in the prison, what is going to happen when they are back on the streets? It's a scary thought," Rojas continued. Rojas believes justice has been done at DOJ and BOP is finally being held accountable. "If you want change you have to sacrifice, but it was extremely worth it in the end," he concluded.

## AFGE Joins Coalition to Secure Pay Raises for D.C. Government Workers

District of Columbia government workers are celebrating as Mayor Vincent Gray recently announced a 3 percent pay raise, effective April 2013. The total increase is 12 percent over four years at 3 percent a year.



D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray and District 14 NVP Eric Bunn Sr.

The raise was a result of contract negotiations that were recently completed between the district government and Compensation Units 1 and 2 (Comp 1 and 2), a committee on which AFGE District 14 National Vice President Eric Bunn has been a long-time member.

Comp 1 and 2 comprises seven unions, including AFGE, that represent employees who share the same job classifications and include both white- and blue-collar workers. This group negotiates pay for approximately 9,000 D.C. government workers. "This was a long process, but one that D.C. government employees can be proud of," said Bunn. "It marks another step toward positive labor-management relations with the mayor and D.C. city council."





## Are You “Inside Government”?



AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. and Council of Prison Locals North Central Region Fair Practices Coordinator Sandy Parr join “Inside Government” Host Jason Fornicola during a special National Nurses Week broadcast

**L**isten to AFGE’s radio show nationwide at [InsideGovernmentRadio.com](http://InsideGovernmentRadio.com) to hear:

- MSNBC’s Chris Hayes look back on the Boston Marathon bombings and Texas fertilizer plant explosion to highlight the value of public employees and workplace safety
- Representatives from AFGE’s Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense and Federal Aviation Administration councils detail the impact of sequestration and furloughs on their agencies
- A special broadcast during National Nurses Week as National President J. David Cox Sr., 8th District National Vice President Jane Nygaard, Council of Prison Locals North Central Region Fair Practices Coordinator Sandy Parr and National Veterans Affairs Council National

Representative David Mollett honor the work of federal nurses

- AFGE Field Mobilization Director Tucker McDonald and Field Services and Education Department Director Dave Cann highlight the union’s field mobilization plan and furlough toolkit in the fight against sequestration
- Department of Veterans Affairs Council 259 President Patrick Russell discuss efforts to prevent the closure of a VA hospital in Hot Springs, S.D.

To hear these shows and many more, go to [InsideGovernmentRadio.com](http://InsideGovernmentRadio.com)

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## AFGE Fights to Protect Due Process Rights

**M**ost federal workers never think something as simple as a bad credit report could cost them their job. Worse yet, no one would expect that such a removal would be without the usual protections of a full Merit Systems Protection Board hearing. But that's exactly why AFGE lawyers are fighting to protect the due process rights of federal workers faced with termination after losing eligibility to keep working in a "sensitive" position.

In the latest round of a long-running legal battle, Deputy General Counsel Andy Grajales argued on behalf of employees Rhonda Conyers and Devon Northover before 10 judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in a late May rehearing en banc of the case of *Berry v. Conyers*. This case is a fight over the scope of MSPB review in adverse action appeals arising from an employee's loss of eligibility to occupy a "sensitive" position when the position at issue does not require a security clearance or access to classified information.

This case could have wide ramifications across the federal

government for hundreds of thousands of employees whose positions are considered "sensitive" even though they don't have access to classified information or possess a security clearance. "We do not believe that the determination of who holds a sensitive job [and who holds] a security clearance are at all the same," Grajales told the court.

The union argued that full due process rights are necessary to protect the interests of employees in sensitive positions. That means such employees, faced with removal, should have the same rights to a full hearing before the MSPB as employees in positions that are not considered "sensitive."

The government argued to the Court of Appeals that once a position is designated as "sensitive," an employee's right to a hearing on the merits before the MSPB is curtailed under the Supreme Court's decision in *Department of the Navy v. Egan*, just as it is for an employee who is fired based on the loss of a security clearance. A decision from the court may take several months.