



THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

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

September/October 2014

Vol. LXXXI, No 5



STAND UP 2014



Your Time to Stand Up

The balance of power in the U.S. Congress is at stake this November – and the outcome of the election could reverberate for generations.

In one corner is a faction of extremist ideologues who would like nothing better than to dismantle government programs and agencies, outsource your jobs to the highest bidder, and pad the pockets of Wall Street executives who earn record profits while working class Americans struggle to make ends meet.

In the other corner is a contingent of centrist leaders who believe the future lies in creating good-paying jobs, expanding economic and social benefits to more Americans, and strengthening government programs and services that improve life for millions every day.

(continued on page 3)

Table of Contents

- Your Time to Stand Up 1
- President's Message 2
- Your Time to Stand Up (cntd.) 3
- Make a Difference in 2014 4
- Fight for Better Pay and Benefits 5
- AFGE's Chosen Candidates 6-7
- VA Crosses 100,000 Members 8
- Correctional Officers Stand Up 9
- Save Our Social Security 10
- A Letter from NVP Thomas 11
- Big Savings with Union Plus 12



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

The 2014 midterm elections are growing closer by the day, and the noise from candidates, news media, and interest groups is growing louder as well. You can hardly turn on the television or listen to the radio without commentary on who won the latest debate, lost the newest poll, or made the worst gaffe on YouTube.

Sure, some of this information may be useful, but it depicts a process very different from what our politics were always meant to be. Talk of “win or lose, up or down” diminishes our political process to a soap opera rather than an enlightened debate about the direction of our nation. In short: the way we talk about elections in this country is broken.

The truth is elections are about two simple concepts: right and wrong. The policies candidates endorse are more than just slick talking points, but moral statements about how we should be governed. When we get caught up in the news media horseshoe, we lose sight of the true consequences of our elections: how they impact real people.

Just look at my home state of North Carolina. When a flood of ultra-conservative lawmakers took the majority in both houses of the state legislature in 2010, most residents thought their heated rhetoric about slashing government was harmless. But what transpired since was worse than anyone could have imagined.

What was once seen as a beacon of forward-thinking policy in the South is now a cautionary tale in political overreach. Thousands of North Carolinians were denied access to affordable health insurance when the state rejected subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Voting rights were severely diminished with cutbacks to early voting and strict voter I.D. laws. Even the right to protest at the State Capitol was taken away with passage of the “imminent disturbance” law.

When citizens of my own State are dying of cancer because they can't afford care, my vote is a moral issue. When tens of thousands of honest citizens are disenfranchised just because they belong to the wrong political party, my vote is a

moral issue. When thousands of teachers and firemen are laid off while businesses are given generous tax cuts, my vote is a moral issue. And so is yours.

In Washington, the House of Representatives is using the same playbook: voting to freeze your pay, take away your modest retirement, and put hundreds of thousands of you out of a job. These are more than just bad policies – they are immoral attacks on your families, and we will not stand for it.

This election is about more than win or lose – it's about right and wrong. So volunteer your time, share your resources, and engage with our election program so we can reclaim the promise of America.

In Solidarity,

AFGE—THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD

Vol. LXXXI, No. 5 September/October 2014. AFGE—The Government Standard (USPS 003-219, ISSN 1041- 5335) is the official membership publication of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, 80 F Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20001. Phone: 202.737.8700, www.afge.org.

J. David Cox Sr. National President
Eugene Hudson Jr. National Secretary-Treasurer
Augusta Y. Thomas National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices Departments

National Vice Presidents:

- District 2 — *Vincent Castellano*, 732.828.9449; NY, NJ, CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT.
- District 3 — *Keith Hill*, 570.883.9572; DE, PA.
- District 4 — *Joseph Flynn*, 410.480.1820; MD, NC, VA, WV.
- District 5 — *Everett Kelley*, 770.907.2055; AL, FL, GA, SC, TN, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico.
- District 6 — *Arnold Scott*, 317.755.2093; IN, KY, OH.
- District 7 — *Dorothy James*, 312.421.6245; IL, MI, WI.
- District 8 — *Jane Nygaard*, 952.854.3216; IA, MN, NE, ND, SD.
- District 9 — *Michael Kelly*, 405.670.2656; AR, KS, MO, OK.
- District 10 — *Cheryl Eliano*, 210.735.8900; LA, MS, TX, NM, Panama.
- District 11 — *Gerald D. Swanke*, 360.253.2616; AK, CO, ID, MT, OR, UT, WA, WY, Guam, Okinawa.
- District 12 — *George McCubbin*, 760.233.7600; AZ, CA, HI, NV.
- District 14 — *Eric Bunn Sr.*, 202.639.6447; District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia.

“DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY.”

(from cover)

The choice is clear

The past few years have seen unprecedented attacks on your pay, benefits, and jobs – fueled by right-wing activists who see little value in government employees and the work that you do.

But as bad as these attacks have been, they would have been much worse if these activists controlled both the House and the Senate. The leadership split in the two congressional chambers has been our saving grace. That's why it's critical that we continue to maintain a majority of members in the U.S. Senate who will stand up for you and the work that you do. That's why we're calling our mobilization effort "Stand Up 2014."

This is not about Democrats vs. Republicans. This election is a choice between candidates who support government employees and those who don't.

What's at stake

If the wrong people take office this November, anti-government extremists will have a clear path to enact legislation detrimental to you, your neighbors, and the communities we serve.

These folks believe you earn too much and don't deserve the retirement benefits you were promised when hired. They want to cut your pay and benefits and accelerate a race to the bottom. They would love nothing more than to overturn the outsourcing bans we have worked so hard to enact and keep in place – allowing agencies to eliminate your jobs and turn over control to private contractors.

They will pass laws voucherizing Social Security and Medicare. Overturn protections for the environment and natural resources. Eliminate collective bargaining. Dismantle agencies and programs that protect our health, safety, and civil liberties.

They oppose efforts to increase the minimum wage for our poorest citizens, yet believe in handing out tax breaks to corporations that outsource jobs needed here at home. These are not the type of people who will have your best interests at heart.

Your vote is key

AFGE has researched the voting records and policy positions of candidates running for election this November. Our overriding interest is in supporting candidates who will preserve your pay and benefits, protect your jobs, improve the economy, and safeguard critical government services.

Inside you will learn who we believe should get your vote this November in the U.S. Senate, and why they deserve our support. It's up to you to take action – to Stand Up – and let your voice be heard.

The most important action you can take is to vote on Nov. 4. But there are other ways you can get involved as well:

- Visit the Stand Up 2014 Election Center website at www.afge.org/standup2014
- Visit your state's Facebook election page
- Joining the Workers' Voice or Labor 2014 volunteer programs

This election is more than a choice between two candidates. It's about your future and the future for all of your brothers and sisters in the federation and throughout the government.

So get educated, get involved, and vote on Nov. 4. Stand Up! The future is up to you.



"DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY."



Stand Up and Make a Difference in 2014

A FGE members must Stand Up in the 2014 Midterm Elections to defend government employee pay raises, pensions and our jobs. By turning out to vote, AFGE members play a crucial role in selecting strong leaders who represent fair treatment of government employees. We can't survive another wave of elected officials who are determined to make fatal cuts to the government workforce through furloughs and reductions-in-force (RIFs). Use these tools to Stand Up in 2014.

Your Election Hub

On www.afge.org/StandUp2014, you'll find an array of tools to help you get to the ballot box on Nov. 4. On the front page, you're able to click on your state to find customized news and tools for the targeted midterm election races.

With the wave of changes to Voter ID Laws, it's critical you know what you need to bring with you on Election Day. Along with a state-by-state guide, you can also identify your polling place and learn how to register if you've moved or are voting for the first time.

On the site, you'll find information by AFGE and the AFL-CIO about the issues at play in this election cycle. The website also breaks down AFGE's list of endorsed candidates, and shows where they stand on issues that are important to you.

Join the Discussion

Each targeted state has its own Facebook page where members can join their neighbors to discuss the biggest issues. The AFGE team in Washington D.C. and on the ground in your targeted state races is constantly updating the site with new opportunities to get involved, breaking news, and the state of the race.

The Stand Up 2014 Facebook pages are an easy way you can share information on issues that are important to your friends and family. We also need your help to post news you hear on the races in targeted states and to let us know if there are problems on the ground on Election Day.

Stand Up to Make Your Voice Heard

We're at a turning point in this country and we can't afford to sit out this election. We can help decide if we fall behind or move forward. To make your voice heard, Stand Up and engage with your community, learn about key issues, and get your friends and family to vote on Election Day. In this critical election, we've been called to Stand Up and defend our brothers and sisters in government.



Join the Fight for Just \$10

Go to www.AFGE.org/MyPAC to Make Your Contribution Today!

Join the Fight for Better Pay and Benefits this Election

Do you care about your pay and benefits? How about improving the economy and protecting good jobs?

Of course you do. That's why it's more important than ever that you elect the right people this November.

The past few years have seen unprecedented attacks on government employees – your pay, your benefits, your retirement security, and even your jobs have been targeted by certain factions within Congress.

If we are going to turn the tide on these relentless attacks and get back to a time when our public servants were honored and respected, then we need to elect leaders in Congress who will fight with us, not against us.

In deciding which political candidates to endorse this year, AFGE has chosen men and women who will fight on your behalf to protect your pay and your jobs.



AFGE activists and TSOs rally against pay and retirement cuts near Washington, D.C.

They understand that a strong civil service means a strong economy and an even stronger country. The candidates who have earned AFGE's backing will support the work that you and your brothers and sisters do on behalf of citizens in this country and around the world.

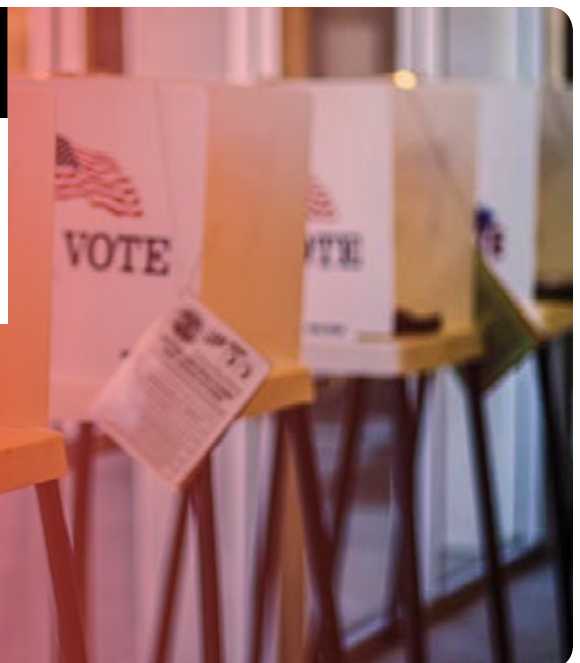
Please go to the next page to learn which candidates we recommend get your vote this November.

"DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY."

Are You Registered to Vote?



Find out if you are already registered or how to register for the first time at Vote411.org.



Stand Up with AFGE's Candidates

Government employees have a lot at stake in this election as pay, retirement, and job cuts are all on the table in the coming years. In a recent survey, members overwhelmingly identified these three issues as the most important areas for AFGE to focus its efforts.



Alaska: Mark Begich
www.markbegich.com

*Early voting begins
October 20th*



Georgia: Michelle Nunn
www.michellenunn.com

*Early voting begins
October 13th*



Arkansas: Mark Pryor
www.pryorforsenate.com

*Early voting begins
October 20th*



Iowa: Bruce Braley
www.brucebraley.com

*Early voting begins
September 22nd*



Colorado: Mark Udall
www.markudall.com

*Early voting begins
October 14th
(all mail ballots)*



Kentucky: Alison Lundegren-Grimes
www.alisonforkentucky.com

*Early voting
is not available.*

"DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY."



Support for a real federal pay increase, and opposition to further job and retirement cuts, were the most important criteria we used in making these endorsements. These candidates support the mission of government employees, and we need to support them NOW to ensure a pro-government employee majority for the next two years.



Louisiana: Mary Landrieu
www.marylandrieu.com

*Early voting begins
 October 21st*



North Carolina: Kay Hagan
www.kayhagan.com

*Early voting begins
 October 23rd*



Michigan: Gary Peters
www.petersformichigan.com

*Early voting
 is not available.*



New Hampshire: Jeanne Shaheen
www.jeannshaheen.org

*Early voting
 is not available.*



Minnesota: Al Franken
www.alfranken.com

*Early voting begins
 September 19th
 (absentee)*

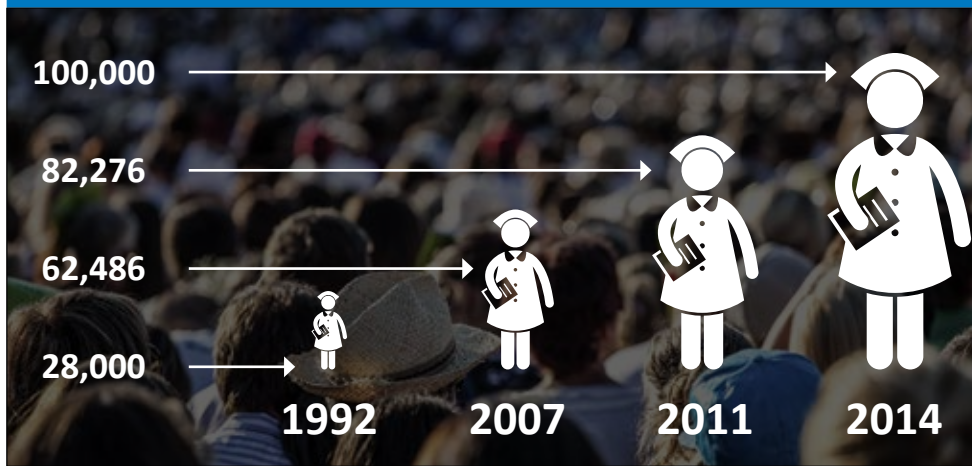


West Virginia: Natalie Tennant
www.natalietennant.com

*Early voting begins
 October 22nd*

"DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY."

AFGE National VA Council Crosses 100,000



“VA employees know that there is strength in numbers, and they see that AFGE fights on their behalf every single day to improve working conditions and give them a voice in the workplace,” National VA Council President Alma L. Lee said. “We’re excited to reach the 100,000 mark and now we’ll start working on getting to 105,000.”

The growth in union membership within the Department of Veterans Affairs mirrors increases occurring throughout AFGE. As a whole, AFGE enrollment eclipsed 285,000

in July, following a decade of continual increases.

“During a time of unprecedented attacks on the pay, benefits and jobs of government employees, we have continued to grow our union because employees know that we’re the only one out there fighting for them,” President Cox said.

“We win some battles and we lose some, but we are always in the ring. As our membership grows, so does our voice in fighting on their behalf.”

After an organizing blitz at VA facilities across the country, AFGE’s National VA Council has recruited its 100,000th member. The remarkable milestone was reached Aug. 25, when an employee of Local 2382 in Phoenix (AFGE District 12) turned in her union enrollment form.

Membership in the VA Council has swelled by 60 percent since 2007, when the VA Council ended the year with 62,486 members. Except for a small drop in 2011, enrollment has grown steadily during the past seven years.

Future for DoD Jobs Hinges on November Election

The stakes could not be higher this November for Department of Defense employees and those who care about protecting good jobs, local economies and our national security.

DoD is proposing major reductions to both the civilian and active duty workforces at the Army and other services to meet budget cuts required under sequestration. Many of these government jobs would be outsourced to private-sector contractors, who charge taxpayers more and deliver less.

The Army alone is planning to slash the military and civilian workforce by more than half at 30 installations nationwide, for a total of 257,000 positions eliminated. The loss of income to the affected communities would exceed \$15.5 billion, according to the Army’s own estimates.

Even if half of these workforce cuts come to pass, the impact on employees and local communities will be severe.

We need to elect Senate and House members this November who support our military and the government services provided by active duty and civilian employees.

With another Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round looming on the horizon, it’s more important than ever that AFGE members support candidates who support us.

The drastic cuts being contemplated throughout the Defense Department are a direct result of sequestration, which will continue to spread pain and heartache throughout the government unless it’s repealed.

We need to elect lawmakers who will say no to more cuts on working-class Americans. We need lawmakers who will crack down on corporate tax cheats, close tax loopholes that benefit the wealthiest 1 percent, and reform the tax code so CEOs pay as much in taxes as their secretaries.

The men and women who serve and support our military deserve a Congress that respects and honors them.

Correctional Officers: Stand Up For the Midterm Elections

For years, prison employees in the Council of Prison Locals have watched each other's backs. They formed a brotherhood, a group of men and women who are proud of their jobs and proud to look out for one another in the line of duty.

Over the years we have lost officers, and honored their memories by fighting for improved safety. We fought for a stronger contract, and this year we got it. We fought for changes to unreasonable mandatory sentencing laws, and we got it. This election season, we have an opportunity to make even greater progress in keeping our people safe on the job.

This year, AFGE and the CPL have set their focus on securing pepper spray for self-defense for all correctional officers, reforming mandatory minimum sentencing laws to ease overpopulation and understaffing in the federal prison system, and obtaining gun locker privileges for

correctional officers coming from and going to work. Through these measures, we can curb overpopulation in prisons and give our officers more equipment for self-defense when patrolling alone.

But we can only accomplish these goals if we elect the right people. With strong advocates for prison reform in our elected government, we can make our prisons a safer workplace. Make your vote count in November.



CPL members honored their fallen brothers at a Memphis, Tn vigil

Airport Security Privatization Jeopardizes Passenger Safety



AFGE TSOs rally for fair treatment and equal rights at TSA Headquarters in Arlington, Va.

Ever since terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon 13 years ago, TSA has worked around the clock to ensure it never happens again. But some are committed to handing security screening back to the private entities that failed us in the first place. AFGE is fighting to stop it.

In July, President Cox testified before the House

Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Transportation Security opposing the Screening Partnership Program (SPP), an initiative that facilitates privatization of airport security.

President Cox urged the committee to put the safety of flying public first and the interests of greedy contractors and faux budget hawks second. Airport security privatization means a significant cut in pay, benefits, and career development opportunities for TSOs, weakening the salary base in fragile local economies.

AFGE continues to work with elected officials who recognize the magnitude of the work of TSA officers. We strongly support the Contract Screener Reform and Accountability Act introduced by Rep. Bennie Thompson and cosponsored by Reps. Nita Lowey, Cedric Richmond, and Yvette Clarke. This bill would provide protection of TSO jobs and compensation if a security contractor is awarded the contract at their airport, and ensure security to the flying public through increased accountability.

We need you to stand up, volunteer, and vote in this election so we choose a government that appreciates our vital role in keeping America safe.

AFGE Fights to Save our Social Security



AFGE activists rally to stop community office closures at a Minneapolis, Mn. Social Security office.

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) ill-advised "Vision 2025 plan" shows no sign of stopping and may pick up even more momentum after the 2014 Midterm Elections.

The Vision 2025 plan, combined with the crippling effects of sequestration, would make it nearly impossible for seniors, disabled and middle-class Americans to get the face-to-face service they deserve.

Local services would face further cuts and community offices would close, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. That's on top of the 11,000 employees who have already been put out of work because of agency and sequestration cuts. But we have not taken it laying down.

AFGE's Council 220 has organized a broad coalition to defeat the plan. AFGE and its coalition partners held rallies around the country on August 14, which was Social Security's 79th birthday, to save community offices and essential services.

On the legislative side, AFGE members have called on members of Congress to support legislation by Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Bryan Higgins that would save community offices and require SSA to justify closures.

This is good progress, but the only way to kill this plan for good is to elect the right people in November. If pro-sequestration legislators are elected on Nov. 4, it will be much harder to pass these critical bills to keep offices open and to restore services.

Learn more about how to get involved at www.afge.org/standup2014 and www.afge.org/saveoursocialsecurity or watch our SSA birthday video at www.youtube.com/afgeonline.



AFGE Border Patrol and ICE Agents "Walk the Line" in New Video Series

Shawn Moran has been a U.S. Border Patrol Agent for 17 years. In that time, he and his fellow agents along the U.S.-Mexico border have been subjected to countless unprovoked attacks from across the border.

Assailants often hurl rocks over the barbed wire fences as a diversion tactic, clearing the way for drug and human traffickers to cross the border in nearby locations.

Once, Shawn was almost struck in the head by a large rock while his attention was focused on two groups attempting to cross the border simultaneously from different locations.

Shawn, who also serves as vice president of AFGE's National Border Patrol Council, shared his story while standing outside Roberto's Gate, a vehicle gate at the Chula Vista Station in the San Diego Sector. The gate is named for Border Patrol Agent Roberto J. Duran, who was killed in the line of duty in 2002.

Shawn's interview was the first in video in the AFGE original series "Walking the Line" which highlights Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agents, specifically the often harsh realities they face in securing our southern border.

Follow "Walking the Line" on our YouTube page, www.youtube.com/afgeonline.

An Open Letter on Voting Rights from Augusta Y. Thomas



I remember a time when I would accompany my father to our local voting station and we were met with poll taxes and Jim Crow laws, designed to silence his voice and everyone who looked like us. During those days we faced demands to recite a portion of the Constitution or count the number of straws in a broom just to have access to the ballot box. Of course, however my father answered, he was still denied the right to vote.

Often when we address the issue of voting rights it may seem as though it is an issue that doesn't affect us. Many consider it an issue of the past. We assume that because we are public employees, dedicated public servants fulfilling the mission of our agencies, that we are immune from the attacks on voting access around the country.

Brothers and sisters, I assure you that this is no time to rest on our laurels. This is not the time for complacency, but rather our moment to be fully educated on issues surrounding the ballot box and measures enacted around the country to restrict voting rights.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a critical piece of legislation in ensuring equal access to the voting process during a time when overt forms of voter suppression were high. For more than 40 years voters could be assured that they had protections against intimidation, coercion and discrimination when they participated in the democratic process.

Those strong protections were severely weakened last year when the U.S. Supreme Court gutted the portion of the act that required pre-clearance for all jurisdictions who have had a history of discriminatory voting laws. The Supreme Court struck down this section because it was felt that it was not fair to punish jurisdictions for infractions committed more than 40 years ago.

Earlier this year, the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (VRAA) was introduced. This amendment would make discriminatory practices committed in the last 15 years subject to pre-clearance. The labor and progressive communities are working diligently to ensure that this amendment passes through Congress in time to make sure every voter who completes a ballot this November is protected and informed.

We must keep our right to vote and the electoral process fair, equitable and most importantly, inclusive of all. Closing polling places in areas with high minority populations and creating new requirements that disenfranchise the elderly and less fortunate, do not reflect the values of this country.

Voting is a right, not a privilege. Women, minorities and immigrants fought long and hard to earn this right, and we cannot allow the powers that be to take it away or make it a partisan issue. The right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right to representation belongs to all.

In solidarity,

Augusta Y. Thomas



AFGE



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO**

80 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

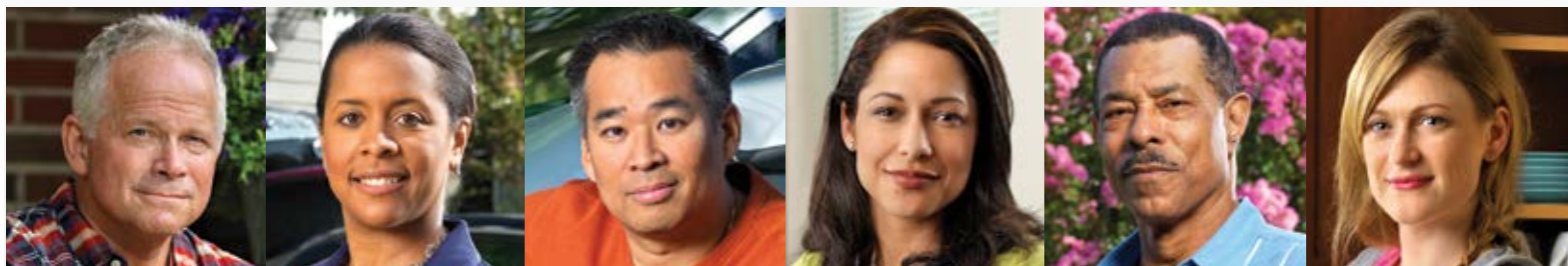
www.afge.org

Non-Profit
US Postage

PAID

Washington DC
Permit #3070

“DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY.”



NO TWO UNION MEMBERS ARE ALIKE.

So choose a credit card that works best for you.

Now there are three different Union Plus Credit Cards, including two cards that earn unlimited 1.5% cash rewards. You already use a credit card. Why aren't you using a credit card designed with union members in mind? Visit our website to select the card that works best for you.

Credit approval required. Terms & Conditions apply. Union Plus Credit Cards issued by Capital One, N.A. The MasterCard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated.



Learn more at AFGE.org

“DO NOT DISTRIBUTE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY.”