

CHALLENGER

Wisconsin - Ohio - Michigan - Minnesota - Indiana - Illinois

DECEMBER 2020

AFGE Local 1395



WHAT'S IN THE FINAL FY2021 NDAA?

*Annual Leave Carryover, Paid Parental Leave Extension, and More
December 14, 2020- AFGE INSIDER*

The House and Senate last week passed the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by large bipartisan margins with several provisions supported by AFGE.

“This critical legislation recognizes the invaluable role that federal and D.C. government workers perform in service to the nation and includes many provisions that our union strongly supports,” AFGE President Everett Kelley said. “On behalf of the 700,000 employees represented by AFGE, I thank members of the House and Senate for their hard work on this bill and their commit-

ment to supporting our dedicated employees in the Department of Defense and government-wide.”

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Getting A Legal Opinion?

Local 1395 members voted during the Membership Meeting on December 9, 2020 to retain the Law Firm of **Snider & Associates, LLC** for assistance with the Representation of our Bargaining Unit Employees.

AFGE LOCAL 1395 MISSION STATEMENT

Local 1395 has voted to adopt the following as its mission statement:

“Our vision as a local is to build a strong organization that will address the needs of the bargaining unit in an effective and timely manner. To accomplish our goals we will strive for better communication and computer skills and build solidarity. We pledge to assist our representatives to meet goals and timeframes. Our local pledges to remain fiscally sound, to better organize our resources, manage information, and build up membership. Join with us for a better union and a better tomorrow.”

The Challenger

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Monthly ZOOM Membership Meetings:

2nd Wednesday (Monthly) 6pm

Email for Link

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT!

Article 24, Grievance Procedure

15 *workdays* to file grievance

- ◆ *Excludes* Holidays/Weekends

45 *calendar days* to file EEO complaint

- ◆ *Includes* Holidays/Weekends



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

On December 12, 2020, I celebrated my one-year anniversary as President of AFGE Local 1395. I am honored and extremely humbled by your vote of confidence in electing me to this position.

This year has been a great one and also, as many of you would agree, was confronted with some challenges.

As the immediate past executive vice president, I was fortunate to come into this position with a wealth of knowledge. With that knowledge, I hit the ground running representing our 2,370 bargaining unit employees hard at work in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

You may remember, on October 27, 2019, AFGE and SSA entered into a new national agreement.

- *This new agreement drastically reduced the allotted time spent to represent you and your colleagues.*
- *Removed vision reimbursements;*
- *Removed the 30-day Performance Assistance (PA) plan;*
- *Reduced the Opportunity to Perform Successfully (OPS) plan from 120 to 60 days; and*
- *Forced out of our 1,500 square foot office in downtown Chicago, moved the bulk of our files and equipment to storage, and now share a 100 sq ft office with Council 109.*

Federal employees' rights and benefits have been attacked and this was politically motivated.

Our Local is not alone; Locals around the country have experienced some challenges. However, in what was meant to weaken unions, Local 1395 has proven to be resilient and we are getting stronger every day. Under my leadership, creativity took wings, we secured an 800 number to serve you,



and our union stewards are now available 24/7 by voice or text. Our dedicated stewards in all four components (Field Office/Teleservice Center, Office of Quality Review, Office of Hearing Operations, and the Payment Center) were flexible in how they served you. Many have used their breaks or lunches to counsel you and researched answers to your question. Local 1395 is hard at work and finding new ways to ensure that you are represented and heard.

On January 17, 2020, I had foot surgery, and my executive vice president received virtual training on the phone. My six-week recovery was extended to 12 weeks. Upon my return in April, like you, I became a full-time teleworker and had to quickly learn how to live and work differently due to COVID-19. However, Local 1395 was on the front-lines in advocating for federal employees to telework so that you and your families would be safe. Thankfully, our strategy was successful both locally and nationally and our members are home safe

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RETIREMENT, A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

In 2020 as things swiftly changed we didn't formally celebrate our members that reached the milestone of retirement. When the New Year started a few had already slipped out the back door making their exit officially December 2019.

They can continue to enjoy the benefits of membership FREE for the 1st year and \$35.00 per year thereafter.

Let's give them a round of applause.

Month/Year	Name	Component
Dec-2019	Briester, Mary	FO
	Dus, Felecia K.	OARO
	Hughes-Crawford, Donna	PSC
	Love, Caryn A.	PSC
	Rizzo, Stephen M.	PSC
	Vinueza, Narcisa J.	FO
	Watkins, Lynette	OARO
Jan-2020	Crawford, Casino A.	PSC
	Finner, Glenda	PSC
	Hibler, Stephanie A.	PSC
	Jackson, Debbie	OHO
	Maddox, Denise	PSC
	Redeaux, Michelle	PSC
	Spaulding, Belinda F.	OHO
Feb-2020	Bigjohn, Lawrence	OHO
Mar-2020	Jones, Solomon	PSC
Apr-2020	Abramovitz, Ruth T.	OARO
	Anderson, Victoria	OHO
	Schade, Julia A	FO
May-2020	Bevilagua, Robert M.	TSC
	Jackson, Freda E.	FO
	Toser, Alan K,	OHO

I made it! I retired!

I'm retired, Stop asking me to do stuff!

Retired, Now I'm the boss !

WHAT'S IN THE FINAL FY2021 NDAA? CONT'D

AFGE also encourages members of Congress to remain committed to supporting the NDAA if President Trump makes good on his threat to veto the legislation.

“Given the overwhelming bipartisan support for the final bill, and the importance of this legislation to the military and a functioning civil service, it is critical for lawmakers to ensure final passage in the event of a White House veto,” Kelley said. “Failure to approve the NDAA before the end of the year would, among other things, result in tens of thousands of DoD employees deployed or permanently working overseas incurring a sizable pay cut due to a lapse in their special pay authority.”

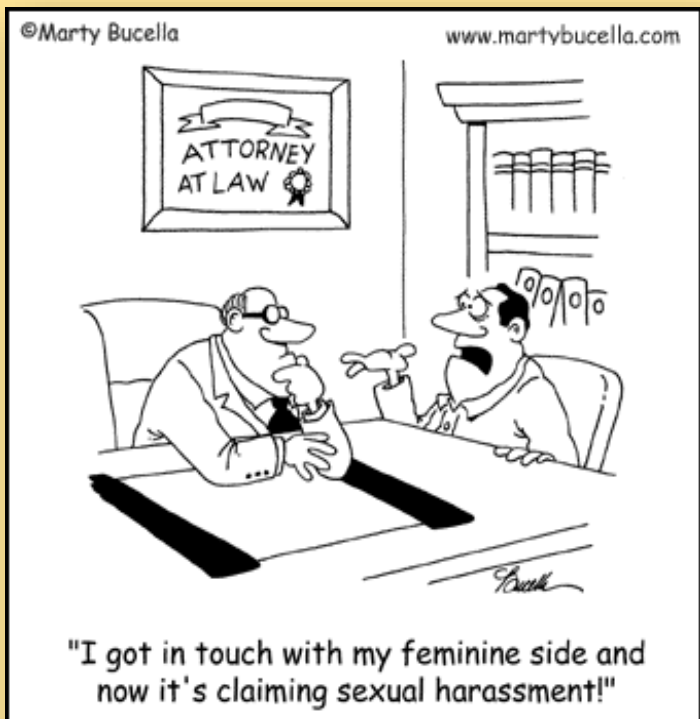
Below are details on some of the key workforce provisions included in the NDAA that won the support of AFGE:

Government-wide provisions:

- **Annual Leave Carryover:** Permits federal employees under Title 5 of the U.S. Code to carry over an additional 25% of annual leave into 2021, in recognition of their dedicated service during the pandemic.

- **Paid Parental Leave Extension:** Extends 12 weeks of paid parental leave to approximately 100,000 federal employees outside of Title 5 who were inadvertently excluded from last year’s legislation, including workers at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Transportation Security Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and D.C.’s Courts and Public Defender Service.

Enhanced Protections from Discrimination and Retaliation: Requires each federal agency to establish a model Equal Employment Opportunity program that is independent of the agency’s human resources or general counsel offices and establishes requirements related to complaints of discrimination and retaliation in the workplace.



SHOW ME THE MONEY \$\$

Join AFGE Local 1395 and receive a **\$100** rebate.

Recruit a new member and receive \$100 per new member. *(Must be a member in good-standing)*

DUES: \$15.00 per pay period



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK CONT'D

with their families. Under my leadership, AFGE Local 1395:

- *Distributed targeted employee surveys on various workplace issues;*
- *Strengthened internal communications among union leaders and stewards;*
- *Created a local YOUNG committee focused on mentoring and training future union leaders;*
- *Created a robust training and onboarding process for new stewards;*
- *Actively engaged in communication with agency management to ensure fair and equitable training of new employees;*
- *Filed countless grievances on agency violations;*
- *Ended the fiscal year with a balanced budget, ensuring a fiscally solvent union; and*
- *Increased the unions' presence at formal meetings.*

Lastly, and most importantly, I have listened to you. I have spent countless hours listening to past, current, and future members and incorporated that feedback into necessary changes to strengthen our union.

As your Union, we are continuously rolling with every administrative change, and taking proactive steps to make sure your voice is heard on issues that are important to you. Local 1395 is here for you and we are committed to passionately and effectively serving you as we move into 2021.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail AFGE Local 1395 directly at afge1395@sbcglobal.net or call or text us at **833-575-1395**. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year and continue to be safe.

In Solidarity,

Cheryl Bellamy-Bonner

President, AFGE Local 1395

Have you *updated* your email?

AFGE has hundreds of opportunities for you to get involved and act to strengthen our government workforce-but to do that, we need to have your most current email address!

Go to www.afge.org and make sure to update your contact information, so you can be the first to know what action you can take in your community to stand up for federal workers.



Have you signed up for text alerts?

Want to stay in touch on-the-go? Text **AFGE** to “**225568**” from your personal phone (*never from your government phone*) so we can keep you up to date on news and opportunities



NEW AFGE COVID-19 BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact communities and families around the globe. AFGE members are on the front lines of the response continuing to deliver important services to the American people. Sadly, several have been among those who've lost their lives after contracting COVID-19. That's why we've created the AFGE COVID-19 Family Relief Fund to provide monetary assistance to surviving family members.

To request assistance:

A local or council can submit a member for consideration for the \$1,000 grant from the AFGE COVID-19 Family Relief Fund by completing our online form at www.afge.org/COVIDRelief.

To make a donation:

1 Councils and locals interested in donating can do so the following ways:


Email coronavirus@afge.org with your council name or local number, donation amount, and a note directing Finance to charge it to your ledger.

Send a physical check to AFGE with "AFGE COVID-19 Family Fund" in the notes line.

2 Members and community supporters can make individual contributions through www.afge.org/FEEADonateNow.

AFGE will continue to do everything we can to fight for the resources and protective equipment our members need, and to support the families of our fallen AFGE members.

For more information about AFGE's response to COVID-19, visit www.afge.org/coronavirus.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO 

Intra-Family Loans and a Family Bank

Among the primary goals of estate planning is to put in writing how you want your wealth distributed to loved ones after your death. But what if you want to use that wealth to help a family member in need while you're still alive? This has become an increasingly common and pressing issue this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to the U.S. economy.

One way to help family members hit hard by job loss or increased debt is through an intra-family loan or even by establishing a full-fledged family bank.

Structure loans carefully

Lending can be a way to provide your family financial assistance without triggering unwanted gift taxes. As long as a loan is structured in a manner similar to an arm's-length loan between unrelated parties, it won't be treated as a taxable gift.

This means, among other steps, documenting the loan with a promissory note and charging interest at or above the applicable federal rate (which is now historically low). You'll also need to establish a fixed repayment schedule and ensure that the borrower has a reasonable prospect of repaying the loan.

Even if taxes aren't a concern, intrafamily loans offer important benefits. For example, they allow you to help your family financially without depleting your wealth or creating a sense of entitlement. Done right, these loans can promote accountability and help cultivate the younger generation's entrepreneurial capabilities by providing financing to start a business.

Maybe open a bank

Too often, however, people lend money to family members with little planning or regard for potential unintended consequences. Rash lending decisions may lead to misunderstandings, hurt feelings, conflicts among family members and false expectations. That's where a family bank comes into play.

A family bank is a family-owned and funded entity — such as a dynasty trust, a family limited partnership or a combination of the two — designed for the sole purpose of making intrafamily loans. Often, family banks can offer financing to family members who might have difficulty obtaining a loan from a bank or other traditional funding sources, or lend at more favorable terms.

By “professionalizing” family lending activities, a family bank can preserve the tax-saving power of intrafamily loans while minimizing negative consequences. The key to avoiding family conflicts and resentment is to build a strong governance structure that promotes communication, decision making and transparency.

Establishing guidelines regarding the types of loans the family bank is authorized to make — and allowing all family members to participate in the decision-making process — ensures that family members are treated fairly and avoids false expectations.

Learn more

More than likely, someone in your extended family has faced difficult financial circumstances this year. Contact us to learn more about intrafamily loans.

H. Lee & Assoc., Ltd.
330 S. Michigan Ave. #1705
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 786-2020

HELPING FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS IN NEED
Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund

Sometimes bad things happen to good people:

DO YOU KNOW A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE FACING A TRAGEDY?

DO YOU KNOW A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE WHO:

- ▶ Has recently been off work due to serious illness?
- ▶ Has a child in the hospital?
- ▶ Had a parent recently pass away?
- ▶ Lost their home in a fire?
- ▶ Has been a victim of a violent crime?



FEEEA may be able to help.
Please refer them to feea.org/emergency for information on our emergency hardship loan program.



We are a national charity and do not charge any fees or interest - if you borrow \$1,000, you pay back \$1,000.


GETTING INTO GOOD TROUBLE

Working For FREE?

Local 1395 filed a grievance against the Agency for requiring trainees on a fixed tour (8am-4:30pm) to resolve log on and log off issues before and after their tour of duty while working for FREE. 10-15 minutes per day for 10 days is almost 2.5 hours of lost wages per pay period. This is in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Trainees Want to Learn

Local 1395 filed a grievance against the Agency for failure to provide training in a manner that promotes learning in Violation of AFGE National Agreement (*Contract*).



RETIREMENT, A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS *CONT'D*

Month/Year	Name	Component
Jun-2020	Brantley, Claudette O.	PSC
	Murray, Charles R.	PSC
	Smith, Johnny W.	PSC
Jul-2020	D'Ecclesis, Vincent W.	FO
	Kearns, Tracy A.	OHO
	Lloyd, Michelle	OHO
	McGinley, Judith E.	FO
	Smith-Frye, Joyce A.	OHO
	Taylor, Elizabeth	PSC
	Wohlrab, Norma A.	TSC
	Visner, Patricia L.	OHO
	Young, Haywood	PSC
Aug-2020	Johnson, Shirley	OHO
	Whaley, Norma J.	PSC
Sep-2020	Coppersmith, Peter	OHO
Oct-2020	Henderson, Eunice	TSC
Nov-2020	Adachi, Christina J.	PSC
	Dirkans, Debra D.	TSC
	McCallister, Judy K.	OHO
Dec-2020	Wojno, Melanie A.	FO

Retired from work not from life

Whatever.....
I'm retired

Retirement, this is it!



STRONGER PROTECTIONS FOR FEDS AGAINST COVID-19 NEEDED IN LIGHT OF NEW CDC GUIDELINES

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) *has changed* its definition of a “close contact” of an infected person, expanding the pools of those considered at risk of contracting the coronavirus.

CDC previously defined a close contact as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 consecutive minutes in a day.

A close contact is now defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 nonconsecutive minutes in a day. That means people can get infected through short but repeated encounters totaling 15 minutes.

The CDC made the change following an investigation into a COVID-19 outbreak in a Vermont prison where a corrections officer contracted the virus after having multiple



brief encounters with six infected inmates. The officer had 22 short encounters that added up to about 17 minutes of total exposure within one day.

In light of the change in the definition, AFGE is urging locals and councils to advocate and/or negotiate for better protections for workers. We’re also calling on federal agencies to protect their employees by postponing any plans to immediately return workers to the worksites, to re-assess respiratory protection needs and provide respirators or fac-

al coverings accordingly. The new definition makes clear that agencies need to provide better protections for health care providers, correctional officers, SSA service reps, and others who may have repeated exposures throughout the workday.

The Insider
November 2020





LET'S CELEBRATE!!!



Adams, Eunice , *DMS*, welcomed her 1st grand child Marquise Amir on October 6, 2020.

Dooley-Brazelton, Gloria , *Mod 9*, celebrated the 8th grade graduation via ZOOM of her daughter Jade Brazelton from Lasalle Language Academy.

Flynn, Alonzo and Deborah , *Retired*, welcomed their 1st great-granddaughter Journee Kamilah Rich on December 9 weighing 8lbs.

Muhammad-Mason, James (*Executive Vice President/DS, DMS*), and his wife, Andrea, welcomed their daughter Arianna Rose Graceann Muhammad-Mason on November 30, 2020.

Muhammad-Mason, James (*Executive Vice President/DS, DMS*), and his wife, Andrea, celebrated the 8th grade graduation of his son James H. Muhammad-Mason II from Pershing Magnet June 2020. He will attend De La Salle Institute.

Article Submission Policy

We welcome articles and success stories that contribute positively to the welfare of the Union and all of its members.

Submissions may be edited for layout and design. Articles indicating authorship reflect the views of the author, not necessarily those of the Challenger Staff or the Local. Articles from any source are considered for publication by the Challenger Staff.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Note: Do not use government time or equipment for submissions.

All submissions must be signed and should be sent to the following address:

afge1395@sbcglobal.net

Attention: Challenger