

AFGE Local 2199

Newsletter 5/1/23

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Calling all AFGE 2199 members!! We are looking for people that want to become stewards for the CBOCS and for the main campus. Leadership goal is to try to get a steward in all departments and in every CBOC. If you are interested, please contact Rob Johnson or Jeff VanCuren at (801) 582-1565 ext 1086. We are looking for self-driven individuals that have a passion to help others and to make the VA a safer, better, place to be employed.



Upcoming Events

Coming in May we have the election for the Nation VP for District 11. Please let leadership know who you would like to see elected or re-elected. Local 2199 is going to be doing t-shirt to show local AFGE pride. There will be a design contest for 3 categories, Local 2199, Local 2199 Pride , and Local 2199 BLACK. More details to come.

Membership Meeting

Membership meetings are held every 2nd Wednesday of the month. We welcome all to attend. Team links will be provided 48 hours in advance for those that are unable to attend in person. We are also considering changing the time for the meetings to make it more available for the masses to attend. More to come!!

Lunch & Learn

New Year, new dates for leadership to be swinging by all CBOCS to check in and see how things are going and for questions and info sessions.

**BE SO GOOD
THEY CAN'T
IGNORE YOU**

~STEVE MARTIN

AFGE Wins Backpay, Restored Leave for Over a Thousand VA Employees in Oregon

April 24, 2023

In a victory for AFGE and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs Roseburg Healthcare System in Oregon, an arbitrator ordered the VA to restore all vacation and sick leave and reimburse all leave without pay for employees who took time off or were told to stay home due to COVID-19. The arbitrator found that the agency should have offered employees other leave options available through various laws passed in response to the pandemic.

At the beginning of the outbreak, the VA screened workers as they entered the facility and sent them home if they had COVID-19 symptoms or had been exposed to the virus. The agency required that employees use their personal leave, including those who cared for children whose school or childcare facility was closed due to COVID. Many were marked AWOL because they got sick and ran out of personal leave.

The improper requirement prompted AFGE District 11 and Local 1042 to file a class-action grievance in April 2020 charging that the agency had violated the labor-management contract. The union also charged that the agency failed to implement safety measures including providing personal protective equipment to employees. Additionally, the agency failed to allow telework where it was appropriate to protect workers and prevent the spread of the virus.

The arbitrator sustained the grievance in its entirety and ordered the agency to comply with the contract. The agency was ordered to send emails to all employees and post notices acknowledging its violations of the contract and that it will comply with such provisions in the future.

The agency, however, appealed the arbitrator's decision with the Federal Labor Relations Authority challenging the portions of the award related to restoring leave and paying back pay, but the FLRA dismissed the appeal last month.

"I'm excited about it," said Local 1042 President Carolyn Schwab. "It was a long time coming. Employees were just thrilled."

The local and the agency are currently working on a process for all employees who believe they have leave that falls under the decision to come forward and make sure it's reimbursed.

AFGE Voices Support for Bill Setting Minimum Nurse-to-Patient Ratios

A bill has been introduced in the House and Senate to set minimum nurse staffing levels at hospitals, including federal facilities, to protect both patients and nurses.

The Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patient Safety and Quality Care Act, introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., would also provide whistleblower protections to protect nurses who advocate for the safety of their patients. AFGE had nurses from the Chillicothe VA in Ohio to attend the bill introduction event and discuss nursing issues with Senator Brown.

AFGE represents nurses at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, Bureau of Prisons and Indian Health Service. We have been sounding the alarm about the need to adequately staff hospitals to protect both patients and employees, including during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

“Multiple studies published by the National Institute of Health have shown minimum nurse-to-patient ratios improve staffing and patient outcomes,” said AFGE Local 1224 President Linda Ward-Smith, who is also a VA nurse. “The COVID era showed to all America the importance of creating an environment which is safe for nurses and patients to decrease burnout, mental stress, and undue burdens placed on staff due to nursing shortages. It is time we pass a sensible staffing bill to show we care for our caregivers who stand tireless at the bedside caring for our most precious loved ones.”

To Observe Workers Memorial Day, AFGE Raises Awareness on Workplace Violence

April 24, 2023

Workers Memorial Day falls on April 28, marking the day that the Occupational Safety and Health Act took effect more than 50 years ago. The law protects workers from workplace dangers like toxic chemicals, electrical and mechanical hazards, and bloodborne pathogens. The labor movement fought hard for and won the law after more than 14,000 workers had been killed on the job every year with more than 2 million others injured.

But few people know that a leading cause of death in the workplace is violence on the job. One in seven workplace deaths results from workplace violence, more than from toxic exposures or fires and explosions.

Each year, more than 27,000 people suffer serious injuries from workplace violence. Health care and social service workers are at higher risk than others as they have direct contact with patients and clients. As a result, serious workplace violence injuries have gone up by 70% in health care and social assistance settings.

The good news is, workplace violence is preventable. That's why AFGE supports legislation that has been introduced both in the House and Senate that would protect workers on the job from assaults and other forms of violence.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Worker Act, which was introduced by Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., and Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., would direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a workplace violence prevention standard and require employers to implement it to protect workers from workplace violence.

Health care staffing shortages are a major problem in our country. The bill was introduced after a survey showed that half of nurses reported an increase in workplace violence that contributed to staffing shortages, which directly affect patient care.

"AFGE represents employees in the health care and social service industries who experience the highest rates of injury caused by workplace violence of any industry. These employees should not have to risk their physical safety at work," said AFGE National President Everett Kelley. "Workers deserve an

enforceable standard to ensure that employers are taking these risks seriously, and creating safe workplaces that their employees deserve. For these reasons, AFGE fully supports an occupational safety and health standard for health care and social service workers."

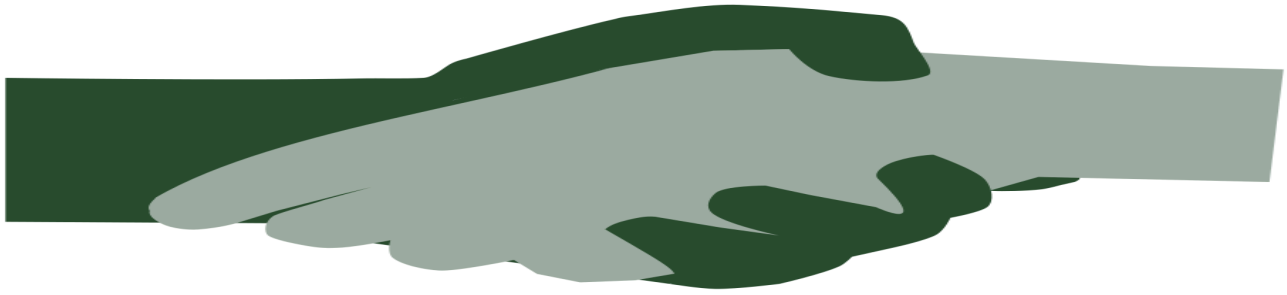


Your partnership with AFGE doesn't have to end when you retire.

AFGE Retirees are front and center in our efforts to honor and defend government employees. That means advocating for a productive, healthy, and secure retirement as well as good jobs, pay, and benefits for those who are still working.

- **Stay connected** with friends through social activities and volunteer opportunities
- **Keep informed** about issues affecting retired and active government employees
- **Take action** to protect retirement security, jobs, and government employee pay
- **Save money** on a host of benefits – Retirees receive all AFGE discounts and benefits
- **Share your skills** with the next generation of union leaders and activists

LEARN AND LEAD



BECOME A STEWARD

Transparency and Availability

Union officers are to provide more transparency and availability. What does this mean for the members? This means that if you need a rep to assist you then you will get one quickly. If you want to know what is happening in the local chapter, then we will have a monthly briefing to inform you of upcoming events. Our goal is to keep everyone informed of local events and events happening on the national level that will affect the VA and the employees.

AFGE LOCAL 2199

Union

President — Robert Johnson
Treasurer/Secretary- Tina Dameron
Executive Vice President - Jeff VanCuren
VHA Vice President - Lisa-Marie Manning
VBA Vice President -Susan (Jackie) Neilsen
Sergeant At Arms - Caitlinn Tanaka
Chief Steward - Robert Malone
Fair Practice/YOUNG Cord. - Taylor Wensel
PRIDE Coordinator- Eli Blevins
B.L.A.C.K.- Coordinator-Kendra Childs
APOWER Coordinator-Caitlinn Tanaka
HISCO Coordinator- VACANT

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<https://www.afge.org>

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