

Black History Month - Theme: ‘African Americans, Labor’

The 2025 Black History Month theme is “African Americans and Labor”, touching on the invaluable contributions of African Americans in the workforce.

Brought to colonial America on slave ships in the 1600’s, African American slaves became a keystone of labor in the newly-formed United States. Besides working as the bedrock of the

agricultural south, African-American slaves (both men and women) were also responsible for building the entire southern rail system, a gift to the whole of the U.S. economy.

African American labor following the Civil War

Fighting for their freedom during the Civil War, African Americans went on to become farm

laborers, landowners, salaried workers, and business owners. Having built the railroads, many Blacks also found work as the iconic Pullman railroad porter at the turn of the century - a job later credited with the development of the Black middle class in America.

A prominent figure in the Pullman Porter story was labor organizer A. Philip Randolph, who

formed a workers union aimed at improving the lives of Black railroad porters who worked for the Pullman railroad. It became the first movement for racial and economic justice, and a solid foundation for the one that Martin Luther King Jr. built his campaign upon in the 1960s. (NOTE: 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of

See MONTH, page 3

VECTR offers ‘coffee, camaraderie’; new VA clinic to hold open house

From staff reports

The Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center will play host to “Coffee and Camaraderie” Feb. 21 from 10-11:30 a.m.

Per a flyer “building connections among veterans” - you can “connect with other veterans over free coffee, donuts and board/card games during this time.

“Veterans from all eras are welcome.” Non-coffee beverages will also be available.

The center is located at 1001 South Armed Forces Blvd., in Warner Robins (near Huntington Middle School).

Also, an open house will be held for the new Perry VA Community Clinic Feb. 24 from 1-3 p.m. The agenda for the open house is as follows: Interim Director Chandra Miller will provide a welcome

at 1 p.m. Roger Richardson and Kevin Kitchens will provide a facility overview at 1:15, followed by guided tours and the opportunity to visit and check out the information tables that will be set up. They include: Audiology, blood pressure checks, caregiver support, enrollment/eligibility, HBPC, home telehealth, the homeless veterans program, medical foster home, My HealthVet, My ID, patient advocate, suicide prevention, toxic exposure screening, flu and COVID-19 vaccines, VBA, voluntary services, VSO table, VTS/BeneTravel, whole health and women’s health.

Contact Allisson Burnett at Allison.Burnett@va.gov or at 478-272-1210, Ext. 72442 for more information.

In addition, the official ribbon cutting for the facility will be held March 31, from 1-2 p.m.

Working in Washington



AFGE Local 987 representatives, pictured in the office with Sen. Raphael Warnock, joined a strong contingent of other union representatives across the nation in making their voices heard in Washington, D.C. the week of Feb. 10-14. In addition to expressing concerns affecting Robins Air Force Base employees, as well as concerns nationally, the group heard from a variety of speakers including AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, AFGE National Secretary-Treasurer Eric Bunn, U.S. Representative Brian Fitzpatrick and AFGE National President Everett Kelley, just to name a few. (Couresty photos)

“Civil servants aren’t villains - they take care of our veterans and keep us safe while flying. Glad AFGE could come by my office. I’ll keep fighting for the hardworking folks here in Georgia and across America who’ve been unfairly thrown into chaos and confusion.”

- Sen. Raphael Warnock



AFGE guidance on ‘probationary employees’

By AFGE LEADERSHIP

Below you will find AFGE’s recent guidance regarding probationary employees.

Stay up to date with all the information you need to know at www.afge.org/AFGEStrong.

1. What is a probationary employee?

Generally speaking, a probationary employee is an employee who is still serving a probationary or trial period following their appointment to a position.

The probationary period in the competitive service is 1 year. 5 C.F.R. § 801(a); 5 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(A).

The probationary period for preference eligible employees in the excepted service is 1 year. 5 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(B).

The probationary period for non-preference eligible employees in the excepted service is two years. 5 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(C).

2. When do employees acquire full adverse action appeal rights for the purposes of Merit System Protection Board (“MSPB”) appeals and union grievances?

Competitive Service

Employees in the competitive service acquire adverse action appeal rights after either completing their probationary or trial period or completing 1 year of current continuous service under other than a temporary appointment limited to 1 year or less. 5 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(A).

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Kelley calls mass firings ‘reckless’ - vows to fight for those impacted

By AFGE LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON – AFGE National President Everett Kelley released the following statement today in response to the mass firing of probationary employees:

“This administration has abused the probationary period to conduct a politically driven mass firing spree, targeting employees not because of performance, but because they were hired before Trump took office.

“These firings are not about poor performance -- there is no evidence these employees were anything but dedicated public servants. They are about power. They are about gutting the federal government, silencing workers, and forcing agencies into submission to a radical agenda that prioritizes

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Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

**YOUNG
Publicity
Women and Fair Practices
Constitution and Bylaws
Retirees
Veterans
Sick and Welfare
Membership
Entertainment**

Call Union Hall at 478-922-5758 and ask for Trustee/Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney for more information or to sign up.



Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a “in-person” membership meeting Feb. 20 at 5 p.m. It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. As always, membership will be verified before admittance into the meeting. You can make updates to your contact information - address, phone, email - by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.



Family members of the late Master Sgt. Brian Baldwin, a former 330th Combat Training Squadron evaluator aviator, cut a ribbon to open a classroom dedicated in his honor at Robins Air Force Base Jan. 31. The Mission Systems Operator classroom, dedicated to Baldwin, was part of a larger training facility expansion that allowed the 129th and 330th CTS to increase effectiveness as the Battle Control Center Formal Training Unit. (U.S. Air Force photo by Patrick Sullivan)

330th, 129th CTS increase capabilities with expanded training facility

By 330th Combat Training Squadron
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

The 330th and 129th Combat Training Squadrons joined with colleagues from across Team Robins to open and commemorate a new battle management command and control training facility at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Jan. 31, 2025.

The 330th and 129th CTS team transitioned from decades of service as the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System Formal Training Unit in April 2023, and were tasked to adjust and begin training students for a new mission set – referred to as the Tactical Operations Center-Fixed before being redesignated as the Battle Control Center Formal Training Unit.

The expanded training facility allows the BCC FTU to better accommodate growing demand, and once the initial buildout of the new Robins units is complete, training will open to the worldwide BCCs, as well as joint and coalition partners.

“Air Combat Command’s funding for these new classrooms, and the 78th Air Base Wing’s allocation of these train-

ing spaces, provides the BCC FTU with the first-class training facilities that it needs to prepare BCC students to accomplish their critical mission,” said Lt. Col. Kyle Stramblad, 330th CTS commander.

“I am incredibly proud to have had the opportunity to lead Team CTS through a period of historic change, during this time of consequence,” continued Stramblad. “The high-performing men and women who serve in Team CTS are preparing our Airmen for the worldwide challenges that Great Power Competition presents.”

The BCC FTU has begun training the first students from other worldwide BCCs including the Northern Command homeland defense BCC sectors, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command BCCs and U.S. Marine Corps partners.

Courses are designed to build cohesive battle management teams operating the BCC weapons system with current training offerings including Air Battle Manager and Mission Systems Officer Initial Qualification Training, mission qualification training, and Command and Control Ground Instructor Training.

Course duration ranges from 28 to 44 training days, and additional training courses are currently in development to integrate intelligence and cyber professionals into the BCC team construct.

“The persistence, resilience and reach that our BCCs provide, make them a critical theater air control system node to deliver uninterrupted BMC2 around the globe,” said Stramblad. “We must continue to improve resourcing and training for the worldwide BCC enterprise to ensure it is ready for the next fight.”

The training facility’s new Mission Systems Operator classroom is dedicated to the late Master Sgt. Brian M. Baldwin, an evaluator aviator assigned to the 330th CTS, who passed away in 2023.

Baldwin’s surviving family members joined Team Robins for the event, which was attended by mission partners who served with Baldwin from the 78th Air Base Wing, the 461st Air Control Wing, the 116th Air Control Wing, the 350th Spectrum Warfare Group and the 18th Airborne Command and Control Squadron.

Tips to support your digestive health

(StatePoint) Ever have that feeling of sluggishness that you can’t seem to shake? Did you know that it could be because your digestive system isn’t working optimally?

For better digestive wellness, consider the following tips:

Hone Your Diet: Eat a diverse diet and limit processed foods and added sugars. A well-rounded diet that prioritizes whole foods is typically high in fiber and other nutrients that promote a healthy gut. Some great choices include beans, seeds, fruits, broccoli, kimchi and avocados.

Stay Hydrated: As you increase your fiber intake, be sure to drink plenty of water to support regularity and keep everything moving through your system. Your digestive system will thank you!

Get Moving: Daily activity is a natural digestive aid. Exercise boosts circulation to deliver blood and oxygen to your digestive tract, helps you maintain a healthy metabolism, and keeps your digestive muscles strong.

For greater digestive wellness, be sure to incorporate some movement into your routine.

Manage Stress: The mind-body connection is powerful, and poor digestive health is just one of the many potential side effects of too much stress. Common stress management techniques include meditation, self-care, exercise and reaching out to loved ones.

Get Quality Sleep: High-



PeopleImages / iStock via Getty Images Plus

quality sleep is needed to keep all the systems of your body in tip-top shape, and your digestive system is no exception. The Mayo Clinic recommends that adults get more than 7 hours of sleep per night.

Get a Massage: According to research, abdominal massage is a safe, easy remedy for occasional constipation that most people can do themselves.

Take Fiber Supplements: Less than 10% of Americans get enough fiber from diet alone, making a fiber supplement an excellent way to boost your intake. One great option to consider, which is associated with a number of wellness benefits, is Metamucil 4-in-1 Lemonade Flavored Psyllium Fiber Supplement Powder.

Stay Consistent: New habits can be hard to adopt. To kickstart your commitment to digestive

health and to stay motivated, try taking on the Metamucil Two Week Challenge.

After you sign up on the brand’s website, you’ll receive an email every day for two weeks with tips, tricks, and reminders for taking your fiber supplement and for staying on track. Many of those who have taken the challenge felt noticeable results. In fact, in a survey of adults who completed the two-week challenge, a majority self-reported that they felt lighter.

“Psyllium fiber supplements have the potential to make a meaningful change in your digestive health when taken daily,” says Evan Smith, NA Metamucil brand director. “That’s why we’re excited to help people see just how amazing a healthy gut feels.”

Try these simple steps to help support your digestive wellness so you can feel your best!

Receive a call from ‘Jessica’? It could be a scam

Scammers are at it again, posing as representatives from loan processing companies to trick consumers into sharing personal information, most recently using the name Jessica.

This advanced fee loan phishing scam often comes in the form of harassing phone calls and voicemails. The caller insists they need to verify minor details, such as your income, to finalize your loan application. While the message may sound convincing, it’s a ruse to steal your private information.

How the scam works:

You receive a call or voicemail from someone claiming to be from a loan processing team, often using a common name like “Jessica.” The caller says they’ve been trying to contact you about your loan application and need to verify some final details to complete your approval, although, more than likely, you never applied for a loan. They provide a callback number and application ID to make the message seem legitimate.

The voicemail emphasizes urgency, requesting you call back before a specific deadline to finalize the loan.

BBB has received over 500 Scam Tracker reports of this scheme from across the United States between November 2024 and January 2025, indicating that scammers are aggressively targeting consumers. People report receiving multiple calls per day, often from different phone numbers but with nearly identical voicemail scripts.

Realistically, there is no loan, and returning the call could lead to scammers collecting sensitive information, such as your Social Security number, bank account details, or other personal data.

Tips to avoid a loan processing phishing



Kelvin Collins

scam: **Verify the company’s legitimacy:** If you’re contacted about a loan application you don’t recall submitting, hang up and do your research. Look up the company name online and contact them directly using verified contact information.

Never share personal information with unsolicited callers: Scammers often ask for details like your Social Security number or bank account information. Avoid sharing sensitive information over the phone unless you initiate the call.

Watch for red flags in voicemails: Be wary of messages with vague details, generic names, or urgent demands for a callback. Scammers often use scripted messages to target as many people as possible.

Avoid calling unknown numbers back: Resist the urge to call the number back. Returning calls to unknown or suspicious numbers could connect you to scammers or result in unexpected fees.

Check for scam reports: Look up the phone number or details of the voicemail online. Many victims post about similar scams to warn others.

Report suspicious activity: If you believe you’ve been contacted by a scammer, report the incident to BBB Scam Tracker at BBB.org/ScamTracker.

Stay vigilant and cautious to protect yourself from phishing scams like this one. If an offer seems too good to be true, it likely is!

For more information, visit www.BBB.org for BBB’s 10 steps to avoid scams, and BBB tips to help you watch out for guaranteed loans with upfront fees.

Medal of Honor spotlight Navy Commander George Davis

By KATIE LANGE
DoD News

Navy Cmdr. George Fleming Davis worked his way up the ranks to become one of the youngest destroyer commanders in U.S. history.

During World War II, his leadership and fearlessness during a Japanese kamikaze raid kept his ship from being destroyed, even though it cost him his life. For that sacrifice, Davis earned a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Davis was born on March 23, 1911, in the Philippine capital of Manila, where his father, John, worked as a civilian master shipfitter at Naval Base Subic Bay. After a few years, the family moved to Hawaii so his father could continue his work at Pearl Harbor.

Davis was privately educated at Punahou School before graduating from McKinley High School in Honolulu. In 1930, he received an appointment to attend the Naval Academy, where he excelled in several sports.

Davis graduated in May 1934 and commissioned into the Navy, serving his first tour of duty on the heavy cruiser USS Tuscaloosa as an aircraft gunnery observer.

By mid-1941, Davis had worked his way up to the rank of lieutenant and was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was sunk



Photo courtesy defense.gov

Navy Cmdr. George Davis

by the Japanese during the Pearl Harbor attacks on Dec. 7, 1941.

Davis survived the attack and was transferred to duty on the light cruiser USS Honolulu. During his tenure on that ship, he took part in operations on the Aleutian Islands before being involved in hard-fought battles in Guadalcanal, the Central Solomon Islands and the campaign to recover Guam.

By the time Davis left the USS Honolulu in mid-1944, he’d been promoted to commander. He spent a few months training in advanced surface warfare techniques before being put in command of the destroyer USS Walke in late November 1944. At 32, he was one of the youngest destroyer commanders in U.S. naval history.

At some point, Davis mar-

ried a woman named Shelagh, and they had two boys, George Rupert and Patrick, who lived in Berkeley, California, during the war.

In mid-December 1944, Davis returned to the Philippines as the USS Walke was stationed off Manila’s shores. By early January, the destroyer got underway for Lingayen Gulf as part of the invasion of Luzon, joining several U.S. minesweepers to provide cover fire and antiaircraft defense.

On Jan. 6, 1945, the Walke was operating without gun support from other surface ships when four Japanese suicide planes were spotted flying low overland, on a clear mission to attack. Preparing for an onslaught, Davis took his position on the bridge’s exposed wing and directed the ship to open fire on the lead plane, which crashed into the water.

The ship’s guns then hit the second aircraft as it passed closely over the bridge, plunging it into the sea off the port-side.

Davis stayed steadfast in his position even as the third aircraft quickly dove toward the ship, crashing into the after end of the bridge. The collision seriously wounded the commander and drenched him in gasoline as flames erupted. But Davis continued to direct the steering of the ship. According to his Medal of Honor citation, Davis “rallied his command to heroic efforts; he exhorted his officers and men to save the ship and, still on his feet, saw the barrage from his guns destroy the fourth suicide bomber.”

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Please submit articles, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afge-local987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.

MONTH

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the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters founded in 1925.) Other unions that arose representing Black workers included coal miners, dock workers, and more notably Chicago meatpackers which helped strengthen economic stability and workplace empowerment for black workers.

Although great strides had been made compared to slavery days, Black Americans were still subject to age-old

discrimination by whites when it came to economic advancement. This was especially evident when black business success overshadowed the surrounding population (with one extreme example being The Black Wall Street Massacre in 1921.).

Up from the Depression

By the time of the Great Depression, work was scarce for all Americans, as Black unemployment rates in the South doubled or even tripled that of whites. In response, the federal government created over 400,000 jobs for African-Americans as part of the WPA program (with projects such as the Hoover Dam)

designed to get all Americans back to work.

Southern Blacks, meanwhile, - as part of The Great Migration that began in the 1920s - surged in numbers as they headed to the industrial north looking for work.

During the Second World War, “separate but equal” segregated Black military units served with distinction with many more African Americans helping in the war effort as nurses, engineers and truck drivers. Although President Harry S. Truman finally ordered all US military to desegregate by 1948, the ongoing fight for equal rights in the

workplace had only just begun.

Following the war, racism resumed in force when a powerful young preacher named Martin Luther King Jr. appeared on the scene. From his pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, he began championing labor unions, strikes and boycotts in an effort to gain equal access to jobs and economic development.

Proclaiming “civil rights are workers’ rights”, King was a national figure by 1964 when Congress passed The Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination nationwide on the basis of religion and race, especially when it came

to job hiring, promoting, and firing.

Under the new law, segregation also ended in the nation’s schools - reflecting King’s other key issue - that education was “the” powerful tool for social change and economic justice.

Today, the march for equality goes on, with powerful forces acting to reverse the King legacy in state legislatures to corporate boardrooms. The theme, “African Americans and Labor,” is meant to put the spotlight back on the history of Black labor struggles, and the continuing fight for a living wage and better job opportunities for all.

- Source: asalh.org

GUIDANCE

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Excepted Service

Preference eligible employees in the excepted service acquire adverse action appeal rights after completing 1 year of current continuous service in the same or similar positions in: a) an Executive agency; or b) the United States Postal service or Postal Regulatory Commission. U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(B).

Non-preference eligible employees in the excepted service acquire adverse action appeal rights after either completing their probationary or trial period or completing 2 years of current continuous service in the same or similar position in an Executive agency under other than a temporary appointment limited to 2 years or less. U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1)(C).

3. When can agencies terminate probationary employees?

Probationary employees may be terminated at any time during their probationary period. OPM regulations also provide that agencies are required to terminate probationary employees if the employee “fails to demonstrate fully his or her qualifications for continued employment.” 5 C.F.R. § 315.803(a).

4. What is the process for terminating probationary employees?

a. Terminations for Performance or Conduct During the Probationary Period

When an agency decides to terminate a probationary employee “because his work performance or conduct ... fails to demonstrate his fitness or his qualifications for continued employment,” the agency is required to notify the employee in writing of “the agency’s conclusions as to the inadequacies of his performance or conduct” and the effective date of the removal action. 5 C.F.R. § 315.804(a).

Under these circumstances, a probationary employee is not entitled to an opportunity to respond to the notice of removal.

b. Terminations for Pre-Employment Conduct

When an agency decides to terminate a probationary employee for pre-employment conduct, in whole or in part, the employee is entitled to advanced notice and an opportunity to respond to the proposed termination. 5 C.F.R. § 805. The notice of proposed removal must provide “the reasons, specifically and in detail, for the proposed action.” 5 C.F.R. § 315.805(a). The agency must provide the probationary employee with a reasonable amount of time to provide a written response to the notice of proposed removal. 5 C.F.R. § 315.805(b).

Should the agency decide to terminate the employee, the written notice of removal must be provided on or before the effective date of the action, contain the reasons for the action, and inform the employee of his or her MSPB rights of appeal. 5 C.F.R. § 315.805(c).

5. What MSPB appeal rights do terminated probationary employees have?

The MSPB appeal rights of probationary employees are extremely limited and controlled by regulation.

Probationary employees in the competitive service who are terminated under 5 C.F.R. § 315.804, i.e., for performance or conduct during the probationary period, may appeal only if they allege that their termination “was based on partisan political reasons or marital status.” 5 C.F.R. § 315.806(b).

Probationary employees in the competitive service who are terminated for pre-employment reasons under 5 C.F.R. § 315.805,

may allege that their termination was based on partisan political reasons or marital status and/or that their termination was procedurally deficient, i.e. the agency failed to provide the employee with advance notice and a reasonable opportunity to respond. 5 C.F.R. § 315.806(b)-(c).

Finally, a probationary employee in the competitive service may only file an appeal with the MSPB alleging unlawful discrimination based on “race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, age (as defined by the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, as amended), or disability” provided that the appeal also alleges that the termination was based on partisan political reasons or marital status or, for pre-employment conduct terminations, was procedurally deficient. 5 C.F.R. § 315.806(d).

Probationary employees in the excepted service generally have no right to appeal their removal to the MSPB. 5 U.S.C. § 1201.3(a)(3).

6. What Equal Employment Opportunity rights do probationary employees have?

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) has long held that probationary employees cannot be removed based on unlawful discrimination. *Ileen C. v. Dep’t of Justice*, EEOC DOC 0120182464, 2019 WL 1988386 (2019).

Unlawful discrimination is discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, and genetic discrimination. Additionally, agencies may not remove probationary employees in retaliation for engaging in protected activities, e.g., opposing or reporting unlawful discrimination.

Consequently, probation-

ary employees who reasonably believe their termination was based on unlawful discrimination or in retaliation for engaging in a protected activity may file an EEO complaint. It should be noted however, that it is exceedingly rare for the EEOC to overturn the removal of a probationary employee.

7. Can probationary employees file a complaint to the Office of Special Counsel (“OSC”) to challenge their termination?

Yes, a probationary employee may file a complaint with OSC if he or she reasonably believes that the termination was a prohibited personnel practice under 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b), such as reprisal for protected whistleblowing.

If the OSC finds that the employee’s complaint has merit, the OSC can request that MSPB stay the employee’s removal from federal service. The MSPB will issue a stay when the OSC is able to show: 1) the employee engaged in protected activity; 2) agency officials knew of the employee’s protected activity; 3) the agency took a personnel action against the employee; and 4) there exists a causal connection between the protected activity and the personnel action taken. *Special Counsel ex rel. Rigdon v. Dep’t of Army*, 98 M.S.P.R. 110, 113 (2004); see also *Special Counsel ex rel. Hoyt v. Dep’t of Veterans Affairs*, 84 M.S.P.R. 314, (1999).

Employees should understand, however, there is no guarantee of MSPB review of an OSC complaint. This is because not every complaint to the OSC will generate an MSPB case or allow an employee to file an Individual Right of Action (“IRA”) appeal to the MSPB in the event that the OSC does not move forward with the complaint or decides to drop an existing complaint. IRA appeals, e.g., appeals that

may be filed with the MSPB by an employee alleging their termination was the product of a prohibited personnel practice, are controlled by 5 U.S.C. § 1221(a) and may only be filed over certain prohibited personnel practices described in 5 U.S.C. §§ 2302(b)(8) or 2302(b)(9)(A) (i), (B), (C), or (D). See <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/2302>. An IRA appeal also may only be filed if: (a) the OSC notifies the employee that the investigation has been terminated and no more than 60 days have elapsed since that notice; or (b) 120 days after filing a complaint seeking corrective action from the OSC, the employee has not been notified by the OSC that it will seek corrective action.

8. Can probationary employees, or their unions, file a grievance over the removal of a probationary employee?

It depends. Many collective bargaining agreements exclude grievances challenging the removal of a probationary employee from the negotiated grievance process. Even for those CBAs that don’t, grievances challenging the removal of a probationary employee are likely limited to alleging that the removal was motivated by union animus. See *U.S. Dep’t of Justice, I.N.S. v. FLRA*, 709 F.2d 724, 728-29 (D.C. Cir. 1983) (explaining that unions cannot bargain for substantive or procedural protections of probationary employees’ continued employment that exceed the protections granted by statute and regulation); see also *NTEU v. FLRA*, 848 F.2d 1273, 1276-77 (D.C. Cir. 1988)(holding a proposal non-negotiable that would allow grievances to challenge probationary removals motivated by unlawful EEO discrimination).

Consequently, unions may be limited to filing grievances challenging probationary remov-

als only where there is evidence that the decision to remove was based on union animus. See *Dep’t of Navy, Pascagoula, Miss. and Nat’l Assoc. of Gov’t Emps.*, 73 F.L.R.A. 443, 449 (2023) (explaining that agencies may not terminate probationary employees for a reason that violates the Federal Labor-Management Relations Statute); *Dep’t of Agric., Food and Nutrition Service and NTEU*, 61 F.L.R.A. 16, 22 (2005); see also *Indian Health Serv., Crow Hospital Agency, Montana and Marcella A. Knaub et al.*, 57 F.L.R.A. 109, (2001) (ordering the reinstatement of two probationary employees whose terminations were motivated by union animus). Once a union makes the case-specific and fact dependent determination to file such a grievance, the union should allege an unfair labor practice and explain the basis for the claim of union animus.

9. Can probationary employees, or their unions, file an unfair labor practice (“ULP”) charge with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (“FLRA”) to challenge a probationary removal?

Yes, but only if the employee or the union has a reasonable belief based on demonstrable evidence that the termination was motivated by union animus. AFGE, however, advises against filing a ULP charge at this time, as the FLRA cannot issue a ULP complaint until the Trump Administration appoints a General Counsel to the FLRA. It is also unlikely that the Administration will appoint a General Counsel favorable to employees or labor.

Please Note: This publication is for informational purposes only and does not guarantee any particular result in a specific case. The information provided is not, nor is it intended to be, a substitute for individualized legal or professional advice.

HONOR

From page 2

Davis refused to accept medical attention below deck until the fires were under control and the 350 members of his crew were counted as safe. Sadly, Davis died hours later. According to a 1945 San Francisco Examiner article, the Walke’s surgeon said that the commander might have survived his burns had he not “overtaxed himself in saving the ship.”

Davis’s fearlessness and valor inspired the men around him to complete their vital mission. His bravery and self-sacrifice earned him the nation’s highest honor for valor. Davis’s widow received the Medal of Honor on his behalf on Nov. 16, 1945, during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Davis was buried at sea in the Philippines, not far from the place where he was born. His name is listed on the Manila American Cemetery’s Wall of the Missing.

The USS Davis, a destroyer commissioned in 1957, was named in his honor and served with distinction during the Vietnam War. In the Naval Academy room where Davis once resided, a bronze plaque bears his citation for all future sailors to see.

RECKLESS


From page 1

cronyism over competence.

“Despite OPM’s guidance earlier this week advising agencies not to engage in sweeping terminations, the administration has plowed forward. Employees were given no notice, no due process, and no opportunity to defend themselves in a blatant violation of the principles of fairness and merit that are supposed to govern federal employment.

“Agencies have spent years recruiting and developing the next generation of public servants. By firing them en masse, this administration is throwing away the very talent that agencies need to function effectively in the years ahead.

“AFGE will fight these firings every step of the way. We will stand with every impacted employee, pursue every legal challenge available, and hold this administration accountable for its reckless actions. Federal employees are not disposable, and we will not allow the government to treat them as such.”




How to air-dry your roses

1. Strip leaves from the stem, leaving the flower. Cut stems no shorter than six inches. Remove from sunlight after cutting.
2. Secure the bottom of the stems to a hanger so that they hang upside down to dry. Find a dark, dry area with good circulation, such as an attic or unused closet, and leave flowers to hang there for two to three weeks until completely dry.
3. When dry, spray with unscented hairspray for protection.

– Brenda Weaver
Source: www.proflowers.com

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Go to www.joinafge.org




STEP 2:

Select your Agency and Local Number




STEP 3:

Fill out the one-page membership form and click “Join”



STEP 4:

If you’re a new member, select a rebate campaign and fill out the brief form (local participation may vary)





Finding the Perfect Volunteer Opportunity for You

FAMILY FEATURES

Tom Thousand spent many years helping low-income residents with home repairs. After retirement, he knew he wanted to continue helping people in his free time. He answered the call to serve through AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP. Since 2010, he has volunteered to deliver meals to those in need, transported donated food to food pantries and captained boats on a nearby lake for group trips. Thousand was there when his neighbors needed rides to medical appointments and the Red Cross needed help delivering blood in his community.

All across the country, AmeriCorps Seniors connects people aged 55 and older with opportunities to volunteer in their communities. The program matches each volunteer’s interests and skills with local non-profit organizations. More than 140,000 older Americans serve their communities yearly through three core programs – the RSVP Program, the Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program.

Many older adults look for variety, flexibility and benefits when searching for a way to volunteer.



“Since it was established in 1971, our RSVP program has been one of the nation’s largest older adult volunteer programs,” said Atalaya Sergi, national director, AmeriCorps Seniors. “The program has a wide variety of service opportunities that allow volunteers to help address our nation’s most pressing challenges. For our volunteers, RSVP takes the guesswork out of choosing how and where to volunteer their time and energy.”

Opportunities vary by city and state, but the RSVP program offers volunteers diverse ways to serve through local organizations. Examples include packaging meals for people with disabilities or other older adults, working in a call center for fraud victims, coordinating poetry workshops at a community center to stimulate the minds of those participating or transporting cancer patients to medical appointments. Service could also involve workforce development and job training or providing disaster preparedness assistance.

There are even select programs specifically designed to support veterans.

Mark Piscatelli volunteers at veterans’ coffeehouses. Coordinated through his local AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program, the coffeehouses allow veterans to gather and socialize with each other and with volunteers. The social setting creates a safe space, fostering community and stability for everyone involved. Guest speakers frequently visit and provide new and updated information to attendees on local and national veterans’ services.

“AmeriCorps Seniors has created a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about veterans, veterans’ issues, what they’ve experienced, what they currently experience and what some of their concerns are going forward,” Piscatelli said.

David Langlois, a fellow volunteer, concurs.

“I really think that the bottom line is to support our veterans,” he said.

Older adults need volunteer programs that fit their lifestyles and allow them to choose how, where and the frequency of their service. Commitments range from a few hours to 40 hours per week. This flexibility allows Piscatelli and his fellow volunteers to participate without feeling overwhelmed by time obligations.

Volunteering is more than a way to fill time, however. Research from sources such as the National Institute on Aging suggests that older adults who are engaged in social and community activities maintain mental and physical health longer than those who are not.

“After one year of service, 88% of our volunteers reported a decrease in feelings of isolation,” Sergi said. “Plus, 78% of volunteers felt less depressed. That uplifts spirits and significantly impacts and benefits people’s lives.”

Yolanda Dave is an example of the positive impact of volunteering on the community and the volunteers themselves. She started volunteering more than 20 years ago because helping her community with hunger, isolation and literacy issues empowered her to be part of the solution. It’s more than that, though. She also benefits from the experience.

“I love volunteering,” Dave said. “You meet wonderful people of all ages. I get to share my skills, my experience. It keeps me active, mentally and physically, which is very healthy.”

Volunteers like Thousand, Piscatelli, Langlois and Dave support people in need and strengthen their communities and neighborhoods. If you’re 55 or older and looking for the right volunteer opportunity, visit [AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment](https://www.americorps.gov/YourMoment) to explore opportunities near you.

Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation

The AFGE Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation program seeks to mobilize young union members to become leaders and activists for social change within AFGE and the Labor Movement.

AFGE members who are under the age of 40 and those mentors that are over 40 work together to include younger workers into the union structure and keep them engaged in what’s

at stake for working class Americans.

YOUNG intends to provide young members with networking opportunities and resources to engage in mobilizing other young workers into AFGE, union training to promote leadership

skills, innovative social gatherings, AFGE conference meetings, and other engaging events.

In doing so, participants work to build lasting labor solidarity, advance issues of social and economic justice, and find more inclusive ways to engage the current and future generations in the Labor Movement.

For more information, or to get involved at the AFGE Local 987 level, call 478-922-5758.