



OSHA proposes rule to protect workers from heat illnesses

By AFGE Leadership

AFGE welcomes a proposed rule issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration that seeks to protect workers from heat illnesses and injuries.

The rule, if finalized, would protect and reduce heat injuries, illnesses, and deaths in the workplace for approximately 36 million workers. OSHA's proposed rule comes as most states are experiencing record-breaking heat that puts workers at risk.

According to the EPA, nearly 1,000 workers died from heat exposure between 1992 and 2022.

This represents about 34 deaths per year. Symptoms of heat-related illness include headache, nausea, weakness, dizziness, muscle cramps, elevated body temperature, loss of consciousness, among many others. Due to climate change, extreme weather will likely continue, and the heat-related injuries will only get worse.

Recognizing the risk that extreme heat poses to workers, especially those working outdoors such as construction workers, landscapers, farm workers, OSHA requires employers to take steps to protect employees such as:

- developing heat illness emergency plans
- monitoring heat conditions at outdoor work areas

- providing breaks, shade, and water
- providing training to employees and supervisors
- seeking input from front-line workers and their representatives when developing and updating monitoring plans

Gradually acclimatizing to heat new employees and those who have been away from work such as those on vacation or sick leave.

The proposed rule also applies to government agencies. For AFGE, this means the rule would protect members who work outdoors such as those working for the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, and those working indoors, such as laundry workers at the Department of Veterans Affairs and warehouse workers at the Department of Defense facilities, among others.

AFGE has been voicing concerns about the heat issue and pushing OSHA to issue a rule to address it.

"AFGE is pleased that the Biden Administration has proposed this new OSHA rule aimed at protecting workers from the dangers of high heat in both outdoor and indoor settings," said AFGE Health and Safety Specialist Milly Rodriguez. "With extreme heat affecting many areas, it's crucial to safeguard workers from heat-related illnesses and fatalities."

House rejects attack on official time at DoD

By AFGE Leadership

Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., is leading a union-busting effort at the Department of Defense by trying to attack official time that federal workers use to work with management to fix issues at their facilities, including understaffing and morale.

Thanks to AFGE and a bipartisan group of legislators who support this important tool, his effort failed.

Perry offered an amendment to the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act on the House floor to require the Department of Defense to report on the use of official time, the decades-old practice that's often misrepresented to slander unions and federal workers.

Thanks to AFGE's efforts educating members of Congress on the issue, his amendment failed with 23 Republicans joining all voting Democrats in opposition.

What is official time?

Official time is the practice in which federal managers and employees work together to make government more efficient, productive, and just.

The federal government is an open shop, meaning employees are not required to join the union or pay union dues. But under federal law, unions must provide fair representation to all employees at the worksite – not just those who pay dues.

In exchange for this legal obligation, the Civil Service

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Local 987 re-runs election

By DON MONCRIEF
Editor, The Union Advocate
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Monday (July 8) AFGE Local 987 re-ran its election from April 4. Previously, voting was done in person. This time it was done via mail-in ballot. The first time there were 383 votes cast. This time the number was 317. There were a couple of changes in position from the previous election.

For starters, however, Marion Williams retained his position as president. He garnered 175 votes (55.73 percent) to Ron Hill's 139 (44.27 percent). A change was Henry Brown taking back his seat as executive vice president. Previously, he was edged out 188 to 185 by Greg Collins. This time around Brown tallied 166 votes (52.87 percent) to Collins' 148 (47.13 percent). For treasurer, Jeanette McElhaney retained the position she has held for approximately 14 years now. She received 159 votes (51.29 percent) to Monica Bridges Davis' 151 (48.71 percent).

For secretary, Jerry Galloway won "by acclamation" – as he did the first time – receiving 245 votes (100 percent).

James Watson also retained the position of vice president of maintenance. He received 187 votes (60.52 percent) to Eldorado Lee's 122 (39.48 percent).

Gwen King remained vice president of DLA with 166 votes (53.72 percent) to Alexandria Williams' 143 (46.28 percent).

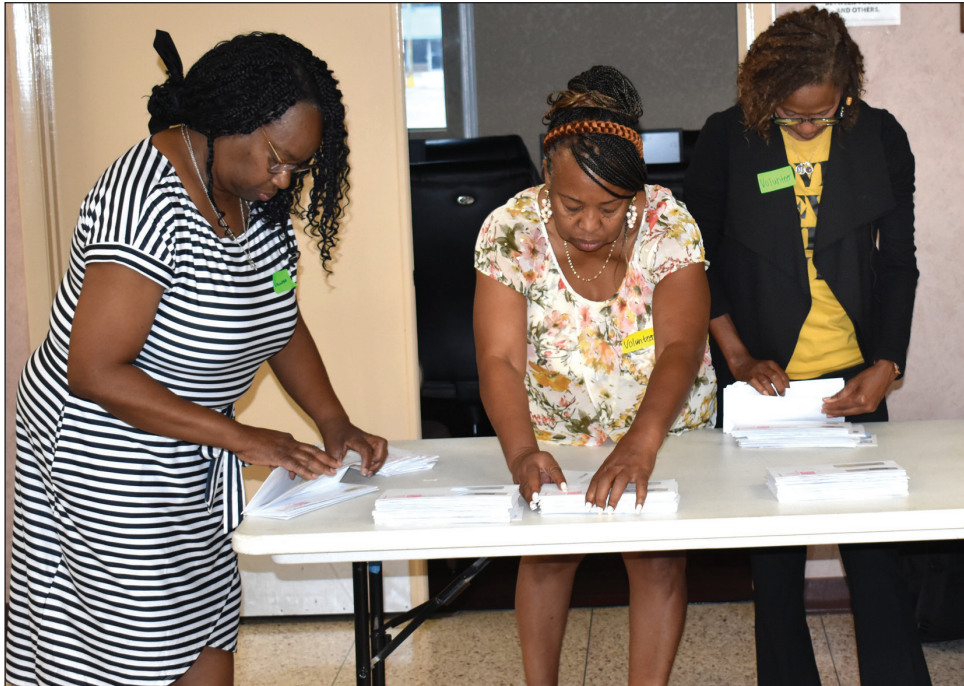
Vice president at-large ended with the need for a runoff (date TBD). That will be between

Sharon Kornegay, who received 133 votes (42.77 percent) and Matthew Hawkins, who received 109 votes (46.28 percent). This will be the second they have had to have a runoff. The first one was on April 19 with Kornegay coming out on top.

As far as sergeant-of-arms, Sam Berry unseated Bromiekus King. King won the first time around (195 to 180). This time Berry

received with 155 votes (50.82 percent) while King had 150 (49.18 percent).

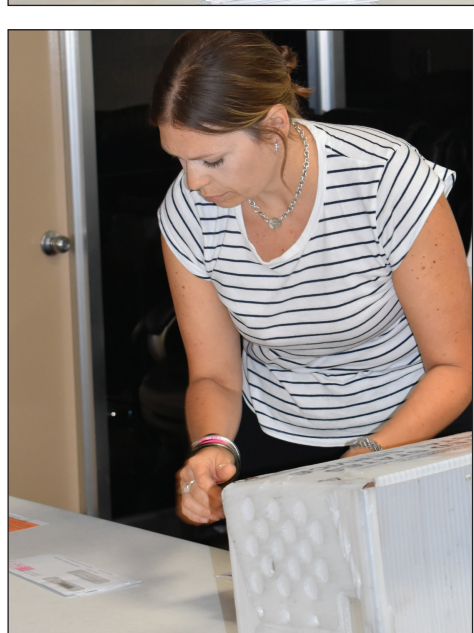
For Trustee, Tommy Gibson and Teresa Freeman retained their seats while Curtis McCants and Cathy Mills will have to go to a runoff. Gibson received 165 (55.62 percent) and Freeman 161 (54.27 percent). McCants finished with 146 (49.21 percent) and Mills (48.20 percent).



Above/below: Volunteers separate ballots during AFGE Local 987's runoff election July 8. (AFGE Local 987 photos/Don Moncrief)

Election results

- President – Marion Williams
- Executive Vice President – Henry Brown
- Treasurer – Jeanette McElhaney
- Secretary – Jerry Galloway
- Vice President of Maintenance – James Watson
- Vice President of DLA – Gwen King
- Vice President at-Large – Runoff (TBD) Sharon Kornegay and Matthew Hawkins
- Sergeant-of-Arms – Sam Berry
- Trustees – Tommy Gibson and Teresa Freeman. Runoff for third seat between Curtis McCants and Cathy Mills



Election chair/National Representative, District 5, AFL-CIO Casie Flowers Nation helps sort the ballots.



A member of TrueBallot Inc., prepares to remove the votes from the box used to bring them back from the post office.



Watch party

AFGE Local 987 played host, and was part-sponsor, along with the Houston County Democrats, to a Presidential debate watch party June 27. The event featured food, giveaways and a big-screen TV to allow attendees to watch the debate. Pictured, from left: Jeanette McElhaney, AFGE Treasurer, LaRhonda Patrick, Mayor Warner Robins, Jonathan Johnson, President Houston County NAACP, Kristen Kiefer, President Houston County Democratic Party and Dorothy Ridley, President Macon Chapter APRI. More photos, page 6. (AFGE Local 987 photo Don Moncrief)

MONTH

Save the date

Membership meeting
Local 987 will have a membership meeting July 18 at 5 p.m. (Doors open at 4 p.m., with refreshments/available.) It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. (It will also be on Zoom.) 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.



Air Force Col. Craig Giles (right), incoming Defense Logistics Agency Aviation at Warner Robins commander, accepts the guidon from Air Force Brig. Gen. Sean Tyler, DLA Aviation commander, during a change of command ceremony June 28 at the Museum of Aviation on Robins Air Force Base. (Photo by Tommie Horton, U.S. Air Force)

New leader takes charge of DLA activity

By AMY PERRY

DLA Aviation Public Affairs
Robins Air Force Base

The team from Defense Logistics Agency Aviation at Warner Robins welcomed their new leader during a change of command ceremony June 28 at the Museum of Aviation here on base.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Sean Tyler, DLA Aviation commander, officiated the transfer of authority to Air Force Col. Craig Giles from Air Force Col. Brian Mayer, who celebrated his retirement during an immediately following ceremony.

The mission of DLA Aviation at Warner Robins includes overseeing more than 300 military and civilian personnel as they work to provide supply, storage and distribution of more than \$120 million in material support for depot-level maintenance of 900-plus aircraft across the F-15, C-130, C-17 and C-5 fleets.

Tyler said the Georgia-based team's success is due to Mayer focusing the workforce on innovation, data analytics and deep-dive reviews of weapon system support data.

"It's truly the attention and

emphasis on these key areas that allowed his team to help overcome readiness challenges we collectively face in keeping some of our older weapon systems in fighting shape," he said. "For instance — and this is just one example — his leadership was critical when a cracked C-130H propeller barrel led to the grounding of more than 100 aircraft in the fleet, which meant over 300 propellers were suddenly headed into maintenance for repair.

"Brian and his team made recovery and parts support their top priority, which led to a unique bill of materials that was tracked weekly and coordinated with OEM and supply chain planners to ensure continual stock availability," said Tyler. "Along with other actions in this effort, the big win in this was a 99% Order Response Time rate that got the fleet back on its foot approximately eight months earlier than projected when the incident occurred. Unsurprisingly, Brian was recognized with the DLA Director's Strategic Goals award for this incredible support effort."

Recognizing the upcoming retirement ceremony for Mayer,

Tyler shared his appreciation of Mayer's family and friends for supporting his career that started in 1989 as an airman following in his father's footsteps, joining the service along with his three other siblings. After his enlistment, Mayer left the service briefly to earn a Bachelor of Science from the University of Alabama in 1998. Afterward, he rejoined the Air Force, receiving a commission through the Officer Training School.

After extolling his decades of service throughout several deployments and key commands and positions throughout the Defense Department, Tyler thanked Mayer for his service and wished him luck during his retirement.

"Brian, you've left a permanent mark of excellence not only on this activity and its people but also on DLA, the Air Force, DoD, our nation and our partners overseas," Tyler said. "I thank you for your strong leadership, humility, care and service. As you retire and enter a new phase of life, I wish only the very best for you and Stephanie and that you both take some well-deserved time to relax at home, travel or do whatever brings you the most joy."

Mayer reciprocally thanked Tyler for his own leadership over the past few years and then recognized his team for their accomplishments and overall excellence.

"I've been honored to have the privilege to be your commander," he said. "In my assumption of command speech three years ago, I talked about the difficult environment the U.S. finds itself in. It's constantly evolving at a remarkable pace from a distinctive advantage over our enemies to

See DLA, page 3

BBB tip: Choosing a mortgage leader

The housing market is constantly changing. Whether it's competitive or slow, if you want to buy a home, you need to be prepared.

As a prospective buyer, you can make your offers on homes more competitive by getting pre-approved for financing from a mortgage lender before even bidding on a house. This lets the seller know you're a serious buyer and provides reassurance that the sale will close without issues.

Fortunately, shopping around, comparing prices, and negotiating deals can save you thousands of dollars on a mortgage. To get the best deal, compare all the costs, and understand how mortgages work.

If you are buying a home, refinancing your home, or taking out a home equity loan, follow these tips to help make your search for a mortgage lender a success.

How to shop for a mortgage lender

■ Know how much you can spend upfront. Before you ask for information from a lender, it's a good idea to know how much you can spend on a loan and the maximum monthly payment you can afford. This information will be crucial to your home search and negotiations, so review your budget beforehand. Get familiar with interest rates, too. Depending on the economy and if mortgage loan interest rates are high or low, this may impact how much you can spend on a home.

■ Get to know your loan options. Loan options include loan terms, interest rates, and the loan type. The loan term refers to the length of the loan, which may be 15 or 30 years. Shorter loans usually have higher monthly payments with lower interest rates. Interest rate types may be fixed or adjustable. Fixed-rate loans are lower risk but carry higher interest rates.

Adjustable-rate mortgages have lower interest rates, but the rates can change over time. Loan types may be conventional or part of a government program. A trustworthy mortgage lender can help you understand your options



Kelvin Collins

and choose the best loan for you.

■ Understand the difference between a broker and a lender. According to ConsumerFinance.gov, a lender is a bank or other financial institution that loans money directly to you.

A broker acts as a middleman, comparing loan options on your behalf. The Federal Trade Commission adds, "It might not always be clear if you're dealing with a lender or a broker, so if you're not sure, ask." You'll want to know who you're working with since brokers usually pay a service fee separate from the lender's fees. There are brokers and lenders, so evaluate those differences and see what works best for you.

■ Get information from multiple lenders and brokers before making a decision. The FTC advises getting as much information from each lender as possible. Keep your options open since different lenders may offer different rates.

Ask about interest rates, loan types, annual percentage rates, points, down payments, mortgage insurance, and all other fees. This will help you get a clear view of the actual cost of the mortgage.

■ Understand whether you should pay points. Your mortgage lender will likely give you the option of paying for discount points. Mortgage points are fees you pay a lender to reduce the interest rate on a mortgage. Typically, one discount point equals 1% of the mortgage amount and will reduce your interest rate by .25%. Depending on how long you plan to keep your home and your mortgage, this extra cost may or may not make sense. This calculator will help you figure that out.

■ Be prepared to negotiate the best deal. Loan officers and brokers can keep some or all of the overages (the difference between the lowest available price and any higher price you agree to) of a loan as extra compensation.

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Medal of Honor spotlight

Army Spc. Ross McGinnis

By KATIE LANGE

DoD News

Army Spc. Ross Andrew McGinnis wanted to serve his country for as long as his family could remember, so it was no surprise to them that he joined up in the years after 9/11.

He was sent to Iraq to fight in the global war on terror, and while he never came home from that mission, four other men did thanks to his courage. McGinnis' sacrifice earned him the Medal of Honor.

McGinnis was born on June 14, 1987, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, to parents Tom and Romayne McGinnis. He had two sisters, Becky and Katie.

When McGinnis was 3, the family moved about an hour southeast to Knox, Pennsylvania, where he went to Clarion County public schools, was a Boy Scout and played baseball, basketball and soccer.

As a teen, McGinnis worked part-time at a McDonald's and became a car enthusiast. He took classes at a nearby career center in automotive technology in the hopes of one day becoming an auto mechanic



Photo courtesy defense.gov
Army Spc. Ross McGinnis

in the military — something he'd desired to be a part of since childhood. His mother said that during kindergarten, when he was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he drew a picture of a soldier.

McGinnis got involved as soon as he could. In June 2004, on his 17th birthday, he enlisted in Army through its delayed entry program. After he graduated from Keystone Junior-Senior High School in 2005, he officially became a soldier.

After basic training, McGinnis was sent to serve in Schweinfurt, Germany. Many of the friends he made there said he was known for doing impersonations and making

everyone laugh.

In August 2006, his unit, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, was deployed to Iraq. He was only there for four months before he made the ultimate sacrifice for his fellow soldiers.

On Dec. 4, 2006, then-Pfc. McGinnis was serving as a machine gunner in Company C in the northeastern part of Baghdad. His platoon was working to control sectarian violence in the area, which was rampant at the time.

During that afternoon, while McGinnis was in position at the back of his vehicle, an insurgent threw a grenade from a roof, and it fell into McGinnis' Humvee. The private first class reacted quickly, yelling "Grenade!" to warn his four fellow soldiers stuck in the vehicle with him.

Instead of saving his own life by escaping through the gunnery hatch — as he was trained to do — McGinnis, who was the youngest in his platoon at 19, chose to give his own life to protect his crew, diving onto the live grenade to shield them from the blast. He died immediately.

The other soldiers in the vehicle with him — Sgt. 1st Class Cedric Thomas, the platoon sergeant and truck commander; Staff Sgt. Ian Newland, the squad leader; Sgt. Lyle Buehler, the driver; and medic Spc. Sean Lawson all survived thanks to his

See HONOR, page 3

"My wife and I were here about 10 years ago, and we started talking about retiring, wanting a place to settle down in and put some roots in. This is the first time I've been back to a base I've been stationed at before, so I'm a repeat customer. We chose to come here, and that should tell you a lot."

**- DLA Aviation Commander
Col. Craig Giles**

Preventing mosquito-borne diseases through protective measures

By SRA CANDICE JORDAN

78th Medical Group Public Health

Did you know mosquitoes are considered the world's deadliest creatures because they can spread diseases? Mosquito-borne diseases are those spread by the bite of an infected mosquito.

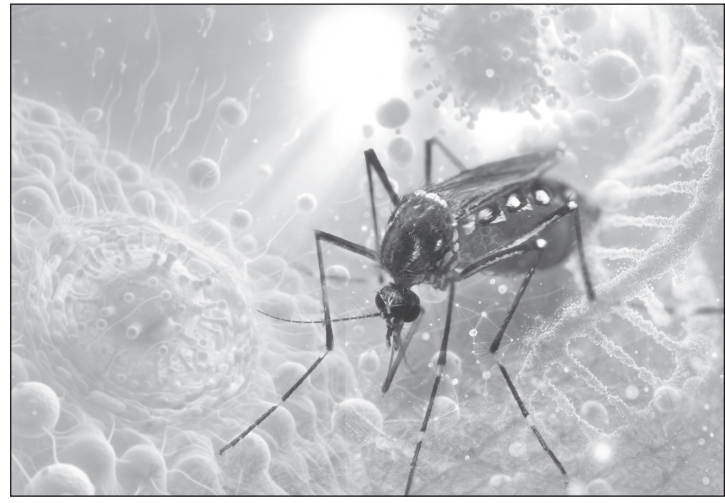
There are over 200 different species in the United States. Georgia has over 63 species of mosquitoes and 12 of those species carry diseases.

Georgia's "mosquito season" generally lasts from April to October. The best way to reduce the chance of an infection is to prevent mosquito breeding and mosquito bites.

Steps to decrease mosquito bites

● Ensure all windows and doors have screens and are in good condition.

● Dump standing water (e.g., tires, flowerpots, toys, etc.) to deter mosquitos from laying eggs.



Courtesy photo

● Wear loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible when outside.

● Use insect repellants that contain DEET, Picaridin, or Eucalyptus Citridora oil.

● OCPs (Operational Camouflage Pattern) contain permethrin and last for up to 50 washes.

Vector control is everybody's

business! Help us join the fight to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses.

For questions, call Public Health at 478-327-8019. For additional information on vector-borne diseases in the local area, visit the Georgia Department of Public Health at <https://dph.georgia.gov/mosquito-borne-diseases>.

Instead of saving his own life by escaping through the gunnery hatch ... chose to give his own life to protect his crew ...

THE UNION ADVOCATE

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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.

Celebrating the resilience of military children

(StatePoint) Life in the U.S. Armed Forces can be challenging, especially for the youngest members of the nation's military community: the 1.6 million children of service members.

From constant change and uncertainty, to being uprooted every few years and finding their place in a new school with each new location, to their service member parent deploying suddenly for months – or even years – at a time, these realities of military life can take a toll.

“Military children go through many experiences that most children don't go through,” said military spouse and mother Jessica McLaughlin. “Having to leave their friends and everything they know to move across the world presents a different set of challenges.”

The United Service Organizations is raising awareness about the specific challenges these so-called “military brats” face, and highlighting the invaluable role they play in the military community.

Military families can find year-round support and entertainment at many of the over 250 USO locations around the globe, where kid-friendly activities are designed to help them make friends with fellow military kids, or bond with their families. When stationed far from everything familiar, be that state-side or in distant locations overseas, these centers are a home-away-from-home, where military kids are surrounded by a supportive community and other military children who understand the unique challenges they face. Programs for military children, such as arts and crafts, game nights, cooking classes and scavenger hunts, are designed to offer a little fun so that they can forget, even briefly, the stress of life as a military child.



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) USO Photos

By age 9, Victoria Hegedusich has lived in California, Maine and Japan, and she'll most likely move four or five more times before she graduates high school, as military families, on average, move every 2.5 years. Hegedusich and her family are frequent visitors at the USO Yokosuka Center in Japan, where they make use of the free Wi-Fi, comfortable seating, snacks, books and games, as well as take part in events and programs geared specifically to families and children.

“The USO is really fun. I like coming here to do the activities,” Hegedusich said, who has especially loved any events and programs that involve science.

To learn more about the life of military children and discover ways you can help support them, visit <https://www.uso.org>.

Military children are resilient, and thanks to programming just for them, they can feel grounded and appreciated, wherever they are.

TIME

From page 1

Reform Act of 1978 allowed federal employee unions to bargain with agencies over official time. Under this law, federal employees who volunteer as union representatives are permitted to use official time to engage in negotiations and perform representational duties while on duty status.

Union representatives can only use official time to:

- Create safe working conditions. Union representatives help identify health and safety hazards in the workplace. When the workplace is safe, workers tend to use less sick leave and workers' compensation benefits.
- Protect employees from discrimination and retaliation. Union representatives use official time to defend employees who

have been discriminated against or face retaliation for blowing the whistle on mismanagement.

- Resolve disputes proactively. Union representatives meet with managers on official time to resolve workplace problems before they escalate into costly litigation.

- Negotiate contracts. Having an agreed-upon labor-management contract benefits both the employer and employees. For example, a contract establishes an agreement that sets working conditions and serves as a reference when disagreements arise. It also makes the costs associated with employment more predictable.

- Represent their coworkers in grievances and disciplinary actions. Due process is crucial in a democratic society. It is needed in the federal government as seen from the thousands of cases AFGE has won in which federal employees have been wrongfully disciplined or fired.

Official time has been vital to improving

government operations. Federal workers at the Department of Veterans Affairs, for example, have used official time to testify before Congress about inadequate staffing, patient access to specialized care, and prolonged wait times for appointments.

Federal correctional officers have used official time to sound an alarm on severe understaffing and the Bureau of Prisons' inability to recruit and retain employees. DoD employees have used official time to report on unsafe working conditions and to represent rank and file workers who speak out.

Congress must protect federal employees' official time rights and oppose any attempts to eliminate the use of official time within the federal government. AFGE strongly opposes any legislative effort to erode, restrict, or eliminate the ability of elected union representatives to use official time to represent both dues and non-dues paying federal employees.

DLA

From page 2

China and Russia, who are closing that gap, from non-state actors to Iranian aggression. The DLA Aviation mission described our obligation to the warfighter well.

“Sustain warfighter readiness and lethality by delivering proactive global logistics, in peace or war,” Mayer continued. “I planned this was going to be my focus for the time I was in command. We needed to be part of a team to help close that readiness gap for our nation. I asked you to focus on supplying aircraft readiness safely and by the book when there was no book to write the book. What I quickly learned was just what a great

team you were, and all I had to do really was keep challenging you and sit back and watch in awe as you worked miracles to keep aircraft production lines moving.”

Although the DLA Aviation at Warner Robins team had one great leader departing, Tyler said the team was lucky to have an exceptional officer taking charge.

“Craig brings with him his own set of impeccable credentials, coming to Warner Robins from the other side of the country where he commanded the 92nd Maintenance Group at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington state,” he said. “There, he was in charge of more than 1,100 Airmen and Civilians, two squadrons responsible for the maintenance of 61 KC-135s, a

\$16 million budget, \$250 million in equipment, 33 buildings and an 84-vehicle fleet. He also impressively holds three master's degrees – one in Aviation Management from Embry Riddle Aeronautical College, one in Military Art and Science from Army Command and Staff College, and one in Strategic Studies from the Air War College.

“Craig, you're obviously done some tremendous things in your career – highly experienced, strong leader, highly educated and well-suited to take over this high-performing organization,” Tyler continued. “I have no doubt Craig is ready for the challenges ahead, just like I know this incredible DLA activity ... is ready to continue its long-standing record of

excellence well into the future.”

After joking about being “not nearly as smart as the general made” him out to be, Giles said he was thrilled to be back in the Warner Robins area.

“My wife and I were here about 10 years ago, and we started talking about retiring, wanting a place to settle down in and put some roots in,” Giles said. “This is the first time I've been back to a base I've been stationed at before, so I'm a repeat customer. We chose to come here, and that should tell you a lot.”

Giles also said he wants to make a difference and help the services prepare for future wars, and that he looks forward to doing that with his DLA Aviation at Warner Robins team.

LENDER

From page 1

This means you can negotiate a price lower than what they initially offered. The best way to negotiate is to have the broker or lender give you a written list of all the costs and fees of the loan.

Then, ask if they will reduce or waive completely one or more of the fees. You can also show them a competitor's offer to see if they will give you a better deal.

■ Watch out for scams. Shopping around for a mortgage lender will help you get a general idea of how much a loan costs, which will help you spot and avoid any offers that seem too good to be true. Be wary of unsolicited calls and emails offering you great rates on a mortgage or “no-cost” loans. Never give in to high-pressure sales tactics.

ConsumerFinance.gov warns about phishing scams where con artists attempt to divert your closing costs and down payment

by suggesting you wire the money into a fraudulent account right before your loan closes. Never wire money until you verify the closing instructions in person with your trusted loan representatives.

For more information, visit BBB.org to review BBB's Home HQ for information on buying, selling, building, and where to find help for improving the inside and outside of your home. You can also visit the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau's mortgage page to learn more about how mortgages work.

HONOR

From page 2

bravery and selflessness. Shortly after his death, McGinnis' parents released a statement about him that said in part, “The lives of four men who were his Army brothers outweighed the value of his one life. ... The choice for Ross was simple, but simple does not mean easy. His straightforward answer to a simple but difficult choice should stand as a shining example for the rest of us. We all face

simple choices, but how often do we choose to make a sacrifice to get the right answer? The right choice sometimes requires honor.”

On June 2, 2008, former President George W. Bush presented McGinnis' parents with the Medal of Honor during a White House ceremony. His sisters and the soldiers he helped save were also in attendance. McGinnis was posthumously promoted to specialist and also received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

“I know medals never crossed

his mind. He was always about friendships and relationships,” McGinnis' father later said. “He just took that to the ultimate this time.”

McGinnis is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He's one of only three Medal of Honor recipients from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to be buried there.

McGinnis continues to be remembered across the military community and in his home state. In the past 15 years, the Pittsburgh military processing center was renamed in his

honor, as was a post office in his hometown. In 2017, the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center in Columbus, Georgia, dedicated a statue bearing McGinnis' likeness as part of its Global War on Terrorism Memorial.

On Veterans Day 2009, former President Barack Obama left a presidential coin at the young soldier's grave after remembrance services at the cemetery. McGinnis' medal is on display at the First Infantry Division Museum in Wheaton, Illinois.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Actions/decisions:

Shepherd Electric to pay \$185,806 to settle EEOC race discrimination, retaliation suit

Shepherd Electric Co., Inc., a wholesale electrical distributor that operates in the Baltimore/Washington area, will pay \$185,806 and furnish significant equitable relief to settle a race discrimination and retaliation lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency announced recently.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Shepherd Electric discriminated against two Black managers at the company's Laurel, Maryland warehouse. After one of the managers complained the company disciplined Black employees more harshly than white employees, he was fired, despite his many years of service with outstanding performance.

The EEOC further charged that the company discriminated against another manager when it unlawfully fired him one week after he complained the company paid a significantly higher salary to a newly hired white employee who performed his same job duties.

In addition to providing the former managers with monetary relief, the consent decree settling the suit prohibits Shepherd Electric from engaging in discrimination and retaliation. Shepherd Electric will provide training on federal anti-discrimination laws, with an emphasis on preventing race-based discrimination. It will report to the EEOC on how it handles any future internal complaints of race-based discrimination and will also post a notice regarding the settlement.

Aurora Renovations, Developments, LLC to pay \$50K to settle religious discrimination, retaliation suit

Aurora Renovations and Developments, LLC, doing business as Aurora Pro Services, a North Carolina-based residential home service and repair company, has agreed to pay \$50,000 and provide other relief to settle a religious harassment, discrimination, and retaliation lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the agency announced recently.

According to the EEOC, since at least June 2020, Aurora Pro Services required all employees to attend daily employer-led Christian prayer meetings. The meetings were conducted by the company owner and included Bible readings, Christian devotionals, and solicitation of prayer requests from employees.

Aurora's owner took roll before some of the meetings and reprimanded employees who did not attend. When a construction manager asked to be excused from the prayer portion of the meetings in the fall of 2020, the company refused to accommodate the employee's religious beliefs, cut his pay, and fired him. A few months later, in January 2021, Aurora Pro Services fired a customer service representative who stopped attending the prayer meetings because the meetings conflicted with her religious beliefs.

UFP Ranson, LLC to pay \$215,000 to settle race, religious harassment suit

UFP Ranson, LLC, a subsidiary of UFP Industries, Inc. that manufactures lumber and building materials in Ranson, West Virginia, will pay \$215,000 to settle a race and religious harassment lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency announced recently.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, beginning shortly after his transfer to the lumber-treating department in July 2019 and continuing until his discharge in June 2020, UFP Ranson employees subjected a Black Muslim worker to a hostile work environment because of his race and religion.

The EEOC charged that employees repeatedly called the worker various offensive, race- and religion-based epithets; told him that members of the Ku Klux Klan worked at the facility; threw objects at him while he was engaging in daily prayers; sought to block and intimidate him when he sought to access the time clock and shoulder-checked him when he attempted to pass; and required him to perform tasks by means that were unnecessarily onerous.

The EEOC charged that one employee menaced the worker by making overt and implied threats of violence. The EEOC also alleged that the supervisor of the lumber-treating department offered a subordinate a pay raise if he agreed to harass the worker until he voluntarily resigned. The Black Muslim worker and a second employee, the EEOC alleged, reported the harassment multiple times to their departmental supervisor and the facility manager, among others, but UFP Ranson failed to investigate their reports and took no action to stop the ongoing harassment. Finally, the EEOC said, 12 days after the Black Muslim worker told his departmental supervisor that he intended to contact the EEOC, UFP Ranson fired him.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, UFP Ranson employees also subjected six other African American workers to a hostile work environment because of their race. The EEOC charged, among other things, that employees repeatedly used offensive, race-based epithets in the workers' presence, refused to help them complete work-related tasks that they helped other coworkers complete, and ordered them not to touch work equipment. The EEOC said that supervisors who personally witnessed or were later notified of the racial harassment took no action to stop it.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits harassment and discrimination because of race and religion. Title VII also prohibits employers from retaliating against employees because they opposed harassment or discrimination, or because they participated in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title VII.

On Aug. 17, the federal court denied UFP Ranson's motion for summary judgment, ruling that the EEOC had presented sufficient evidence of racial harassment to warrant a jury trial, including evidence of frequent use of the epithet “n****r” in the workplace. The EEOC and UFP Ranson subsequently agreed to settle the case before trial and any findings concerning EEOC's claims, and on Sept. 28, the federal court approved the agreed two-year consent decree resolving the litigation.

In addition to paying \$215,000 to the class of seven claimants, UFP Ranson is prohibited from engaging in race or religious discrimination or retaliation in the future. The company must designate a management-level official to serve as an onsite local equal employment opportunity administrator. UFP Ranson must create and disseminate a revised anti-discrimination policy and distribute procedures to appeal the company's handling or resolution of religious harassment and discrimination or retaliation complaints. The company must also provide training on Title VII to the local EEO administrator and other employees with authority to investigate or take corrective action in response to employee complaints of harassment or discrimination.

Creating a Pet-Friendly Palace

5 ways to set up a safe, cozy home for cats and dogs

FAMILY FEATURES

As much as you love your pets and work hard to make them part of the family, they're also a big responsibility. Part of that responsibility includes setting up your home so it's equal parts stylish (for you) and functional (for Fido).

Show furry friends a little love, beyond the walks and snuggles, by making your home more pet friendly.

Set Up Their Space Near an Entry

It's common for pet owners to desire a space to keep all their furry friends' belongings and avoid clutter. Ensure convenience and cleanliness by establishing an area near the door where you can store leashes, collars, toys and more. Consider keeping a towel or two nearby for wiping paws (and snouts) after going outside. You can also keep your pets' beds, food and water bowls in this space so it feels like their own little "home" when returning from a walk or going to sleep at night.

Consider Stain-Resistant Fabrics

From furniture to decor, avoiding fabrics that attract pet hair is a no-brainer for pet owners looking to escape a constant mess. Silk and velvet are virtual magnets for fur, while alternatives like leather offer more practical choices that are easy to clean and durable.

Install Resilient Flooring

Reduce your fear of zoomies causing damage to your floors by installing resilient flooring focused

on reducing wear. Both durable and beautiful, a variety of Beautifully Responsible floors take on some of the burden of pet ownership with built-in durability for the everyday and the unexpected. With options designed to bridge the gap between style and function, numerous water-resistant and waterproof floors give you and your pets room to live your best lives for years to come without wet shakes triggering worries. Plus, many resilient floors don't flinch when it comes to addressing muddy paws, often only requiring the mud to be easily wiped away, without harsh cleaning products.

Decorate with Pets in Mind

Displaying Grandma's fine China and your favorite sports memorabilia may not go hand-in-hand with pet ownership – that autographed baseball may look more like a chew toy than a treasured artifact. Instead, prioritize decor that's washable and sturdy so you can avoid coming home to a delicate family heirloom shattered on the floor.

Pet-Proof the Yard

If you plan on your pets being outside on their own, it's a good idea to carefully inspect your outdoor spaces before letting them roam. Look for gaps in the fence, identify potentially harmful plants and ensure outdoor structures like grills and furniture are secure.

Find pet-friendly flooring solutions at [beautifullyresponsible.com](https://www.beautifullyresponsible.com).



How Pet Owners Can Benefit from Resilient Flooring

It's likely you want your pets to live their best lives without sacrificing your own gorgeous spaces. With a variety of attractive options to fit your aesthetic, Beautifully Responsible resilient flooring provides durability against dirt, spills and sprints. Consider these benefits of floors that fit your style and give furry friends room for fun:

Deny Dirt and Dander

Once playtime outside is over, that mess can sometimes make its way inside. Designed to make cleanup easier, many resilient flooring options can make removing messes, odors and pet hair a cinch. From sheet solutions to modular configurations, resilient flooring can typically be cleaned without harsh chemicals – just make sure to follow the manufacturer's recommended cleaning instructions.

Zoom On

Many Beautifully Responsible resilient floors are durable enough to stand up to those zoomies. These options are ready for your dogs' and cats' fastest sprints, and make for quick clean up when they accidentally turn over a favorite flowerpot or their own water bowls.

Reduce Water Worries

Those vigorous tail wags near a fresh bowl of water lead to even good boys and girls causing a spill now and then. With many waterproof and water-resistant options for even the messiest of pets, you can be more confident in resilient floors standing up to spills so you can forgive puppy-dog eyes even faster.



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- Aflac Hospital Indemnity:** Pays Benefits for on and off-the-job accidents and sickness/surgery/maternity.
- Aflac Critical Illness:** Pays Benefits up to \$30,000 upon the occurrence of cancer, heart attack, stroke, and many other Critical Illnesses.

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- It can be used with leave, or independently.

*Max Benefit of \$6,000 per month.

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