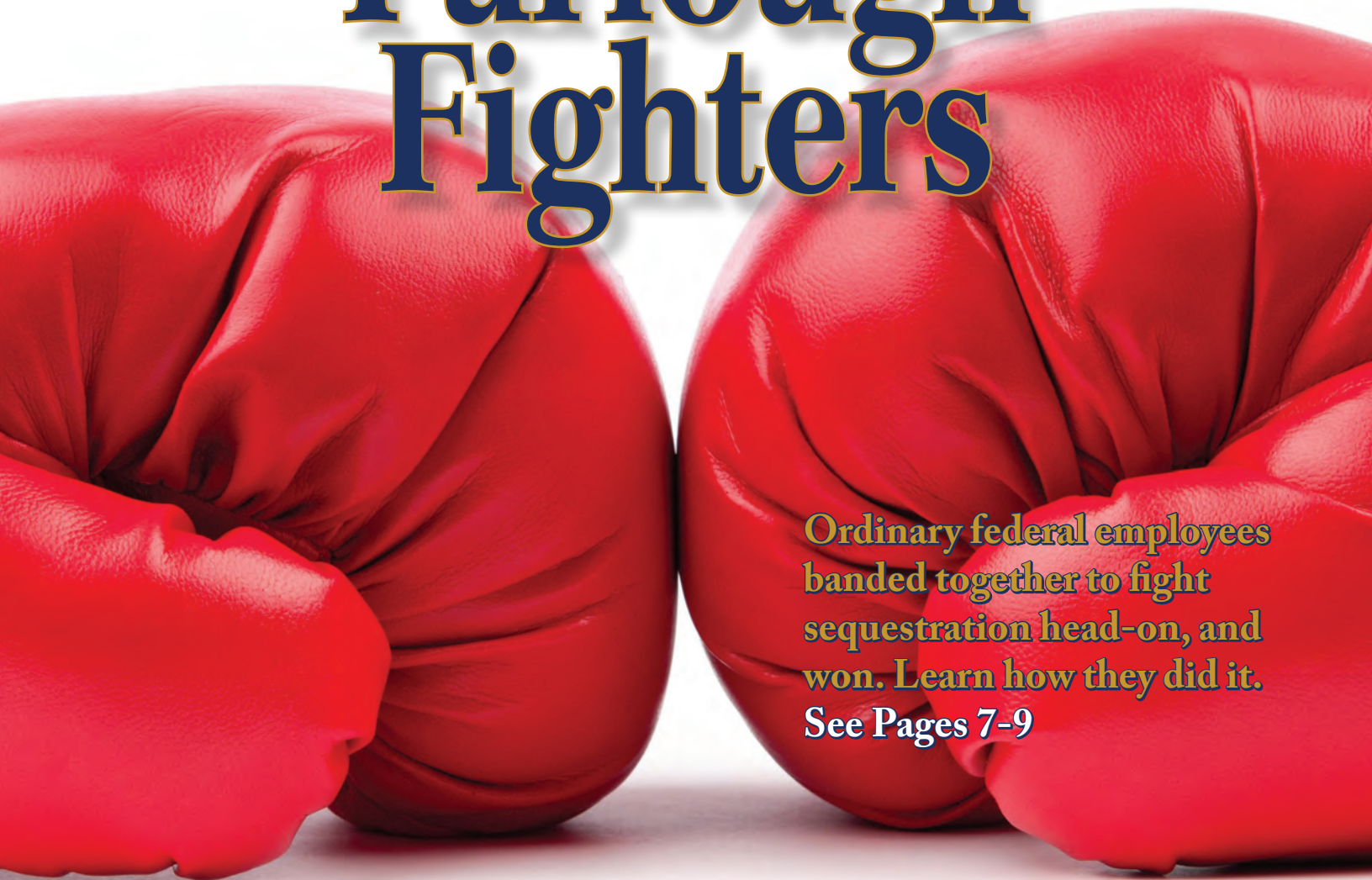


THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO

Furlough Fighters



Ordinary federal employees banded together to fight sequestration head-on, and won. Learn how they did it. See Pages 7-9



Inside this Issue

Federal Jobs Disappear	4
Government Shutdown Looms	6
Wildland Firefighters Campaign for Funds ..	10

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



William R. Dougan

They say there are two things you cannot avoid in life – death and taxes. Though true, they missed one of the most important aspects of life that challenges each and every one of us: change.

For the past several months there has been a wave of change at the NFFE National Office. Our new staff assistant, Kalia Vang, comes to us as a result of Amy Burns becoming a national business representative and moving from her previous position as special assistant to the president. We also hired a new communications coordinator, Drew Halunen, who will be taking on many of the duties previously performed by Cory Bythrow.

Though the uncertainty of our present is difficult, the opportunities for our future are as promising as ever. With new people come new experiences, skills, and ideas. New ways of doing business will mean new and exciting possibilities, as NFFE reaches the distinguished age of 96 this September.

Many of the changes we experience in our Union are being replicated across the rest of the labor movement. As the current generation of labor leaders move toward the end of their working careers, opportunity is created for a new generation of leaders to implement change. And never has such change been more necessary.

The labor movement is at a crossroads in our nation and throughout the world. The global economy and changing demographics of workers demand fresh ideas and innovative approaches if unions are to continue to remain relevant. Many of the ideas

and strategies that served us well in the past must be reworked or replaced. Nowhere has this been more evident than at the recent AFL-CIO Convention in Los Angeles, where delegates recognized the need to protect the future of organized labor by embracing a culture that welcomes young workers, championing a diverse unionized workforce, and partnering with non-labor organizations to spread labor's message to all workers.

Union membership density in the United States peaked in 1954, when 35% of the workforce were union members. In 1979, we saw the peak of total union members in the workforce spike to approximately 21 million workers. Membership has been on a steady decline ever since. Despite the American middle class being squeezed economically since then, a culture of comfort and complacency has failed to reverse this trend. Only by embracing change will we be able to move out of our comfort zone, seek out fresh ideas, and find the leaders to usher us into the future.

Change is never easy, but change is inevitable. We cannot escape the uncertainty, the stress, the anxiety we all experience when the familiar is replaced with the unfamiliar. While accepting change may seem a contradiction, embracing it is a must if we are to grow individually and collectively.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William R. Dougan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

Those of you who know me know how proud I am of each and every one of you who joins us at the IAM's William W. Winpisinger Center for training. Whether you come for the Federal Employees Basic/Advanced Class, Federal Sector Collective Bargaining, or a steward training for your particular agency, you leave with the most powerful gift a unionist can get: knowledge.

My point here is not to tell you to bring yourself to the Center – I've already done that more times than I can remember. My goal is to urge you to bring the Center *back* with you to your Local. Let's call this "paying it forward."

Paying it forward means using the opportunities you've had to learn about being a better unionist to teach others what it means to be so. It means taking others under your wing and giving them the tools, resources, and concepts they need to fly on their own. It means building a better NFFE for future generations to lead.

Interestingly, this concept is nothing new. In the late 19th century, when unionism was often outlawed, workers would meet in secret to discuss recruiting tactics, how to leverage worker power with employers, and how to pool resources and build a solidarity movement. With labor now out of the shadows and a slew of powerful communications tools in our hands, the limits of our progress are only as high our will to pursue them.

Our Union and our movement will only be as strong as we will it to be. By passing the torch of knowledge to others at every opportunity, we can build that lasting movement for all federal employees – just as our forbearers did for us.

Thank you all for everything you do. Please contact me or our finance director, Omar Arnold, with any financial concerns.



William D. Fenaughty

FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

I regret, as I write this, to inform the NFFE-IAM membership that the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) continues to be unable to issue decisions because only one of the three FLRA positions is currently filled.

It has been this way since January 1, 2013. Nine months without a functioning FLRA is very problematic for employees, unions, and federal agencies. Approximately 60% or more of the FLRA's decisions are regarding the review of arbitrator decisions. This is a very important role because an agency is not required to implement an arbitrator's ruling until the FLRA has ruled on the appeal. And these decisions have real impacts on regular federal employees. Right now, I know of several NFFE-IAM members whose cases are pending before the FLRA and who just want a decision so that they can move on with their lives. For now, they must wait.

Another important role the FLRA plays is concerning negotiability appeals, which are disputes over whether a Union's proposal is negotiable. Suffice it to say, it is not practical for Union and agency negotiators to wait around for months or years to get a determination on whether a proposal is negotiable. All of this is to say, labor relations in the federal sector cannot properly operate without a fully functioning FLRA.

The longer the FLRA is not functioning, the longer it will take to get rid of the backlog of cases that is building up in the meantime. In 2009 and 2010, the FLRA made considerable effort in reducing the backlog of cases that built up during the Bush Administration. That work is being undone with every passing day. I would ask that all NFFE-IAM members write to their U.S. Senators and ask them to confirm pending nominees so that the FLRA can once again start issuing decisions.



Stefan Sutich



Randy Erwin

FROM THE DESK OF THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

As the federal workforce continues through the uncharted waters of sequestration (mandatory budget cuts at federal agencies), it is more important than ever that NFFE Locals and Councils establish and make use of legislative committees. NFFE-IAM members deserve a voice on the issues in Washington that impact them, and a Local or Council legislative committee is essential to giving them that voice.

In Washington, NFFE and the IAM are working tirelessly day in and day out to protect federal workers from harmful proposals to gut federal workers' pay, benefits, rights, and job security. But we can't expect to win these fights without the engagement of the NFFE-IAM members

throughout the country. The simple fact is members of Congress care more about what federal workers in their districts have to say about federal employee issues than they do about what folks in Washington have to say.

Something we hear from members of Congress quite frequently in Washington is that while they agree federal employees have been unfairly targeted for cuts over the last few years, they haven't heard from a lot of federal employees directly about the issues impacting them. They aren't getting enough phone calls and letters about issues like pay freezes, retirement cuts, and even furloughs. These lawmakers conclude that if federal employees aren't calling their offices, they must not

LEGISLATIVE

HUD Announces Plan to Cut Furlough Days by Two

The latest in a long list of agencies reducing furloughs this summer, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced in August that it would be canceling two furlough days. The move drops total furlough days at the Department down to five from the originally scheduled seven.

NFFE HUD Locals and the employees they represent have been actively fighting the furloughs for months. Emphasizing the hardship they would cause employees, NFFE leaders like Local 1450 President and NFFE National Vice President Liz McDargh took their case to both agency and Congressional leaders. As McDargh put it in her weekly newsletter to members:

“Our NFFE motto is ‘one for all and all for one’ and our Executive Board has clearly stated that we will leave no one behind in negotiating the best for their circumstance.”

Indeed, HUD's announcement is just the latest in a string of victories by union activists in reducing scheduled furloughs. Employees at the Department of Defense recently saw five days slashed from their 11-day furlough minimum and the IRS was able to drop one as well. Despite this success, NFFE and other unions will continue the fight until furloughs are gone for good.

“We were able to win some big battles over furloughs this year, but we are far from winning the war,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. “Sequestration will continue to ravage agency budgets for the next nine years unless Congress puts a stop to it. The only way to guarantee Congressional action is to demand it, and we ask that you stand with us once more as we do just that.”

be upset about the actions taken by Congress on those issues.

An effective legislative committee at your Local can make sure this kind of scenario does not occur. A key role of a Local legislative committee is to communicate directly with Congressional offices about where NFFE-IAM members stand on key issues. Legislative committees can meet directly with members of Congress and their staff in district offices. Legislative committees can also send letters on behalf of the Local to members of Congress. In addition, legislative committees rally NFFE-IAM members to write and make phone calls to lawmakers. Communicating with lawmakers in this way has a tremendous impact on the

way members of Congress vote on issues impacting federal employees. In this way, Local legislative committees are essential to getting things accomplished in Washington for federal workers.

Another key role of a legislative committee is to monitor the work that NFFE and the IAM are doing in the legislative and policy arenas on NFFE-IAM members' behalf and sharing that information at the worksite. This information can be shared at Local Lodge meetings, in Local newsletters, on bulletin boards, via Local websites, on social media, by word of mouth, etc. When members hear about the work the union is doing for federal workers, they understand why it is so important to be a member. Many NFFE

Locals have experienced significant growth in part because effective Local and Council legislative committees have done a good job of engaging NFFE-IAM members on legislative issues and communicating to members and potential members what the union is doing for them on important legislative and policy matters. A legislative committee is not only important to getting things accomplished for federal employees on Capitol Hill, it can also be a great organizing tool.

Please consider establishing a legislative committee at your Local or Council (if you don't have one already). Please contact the NFFE National Office if you need help with this.

Federal Workers See Jobs Evaporate as Private Sector Growth Continues

With shrinking budgets, sequestration cuts, and shut down threats bearing down on agencies throughout government, it's no mystery that federal workers have taken their lumps from deficit reduction. A recent Gallup Poll looked at just how bad things have gotten, and the numbers are very disheartening.

A full 42 percent of federal workers responding to the poll said their employer was letting people go, as opposed to just 25 percent who said theirs were hiring. The poll echoes dire numbers released in a string of monthly Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) jobs reports in recent months, showing total federal job losses in the tens of thousands. Between June and July alone the federal sector lost 16,000 jobs.

The BLS reports paint two very different pictures of the U.S. jobs market. On one side, the private sector is gaining between 150,000-200,000 jobs per month. This is proof positive of a slow but steady eco-

nomical recovery that has been underway since 2009. On the other side, the federal government has shrunk by thousands of jobs each month for eight months in a row. In other words, the government is in recession while the rest of the workforce is gradually moving onward and upward.

This two-track recovery is unusual, as growth in the private sector typically leads to growth in government revenues, and by extension, government services. Why, then are we seeing the federal sector shrink so rapidly?

You guessed it – Washington. Over the past several years politicians have placed draconian budget caps on all federal agencies in an effort to “control spending.” One such method was sequestration which, as you know, has indiscriminately taken tens of billions of dollars from key federal services, placed hundreds of thousands of feds on furlough, and diminished services to the taxpayer. The reality is that sequestra-

tion and budget caps were never necessary – they were largely the result of political decisions. Sadly, federal workers are the ones paying the price.

“People are just floored by the treatment federal employees are getting from their elected leaders,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. “Between the furloughs, pay cuts, retirement cuts, and increased workloads, federal employees have learned to expect nothing short of the worst from Washington. This is no way to run a government. Federal workers deserve better.”

The silver lining in this message is that political decisions can be replaced by other, more favorable, political decisions if the people will it. If we can gather enough momentum to end the overbearing cuts to federal budgets, we can set the federal workforce on its own path to recovery. Our mission is simply too important to go down without a fight.

Sign Our Letter and Help Temporary Seasonal Land Management Employees Get a Fair Shot at Permanent Jobs

The NFFE Forest Service Council is once again making waves on Capitol Hill. After earning health care benefits for seasonal wildland firefighters in 2012, NFFE is now pushing for passage of the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act (H.R. 533/S. 1120) – a bill that would give temporary seasonal employees at the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other land management agencies a fair shot at career advancement.

The seasonal work of land management agencies is accomplished by a mix of permanent seasonal employees and temporary seasonal employees. Currently, regardless of how many seasons they serve, temporary employees cannot compete for permanent jobs under the merit promotion procedures available to other federal employees. This barrier to career advancement causes high attrition, leading to high training costs and a less capable and less safe workforce. It erodes our nation's wildland firefighting and emergency response capabilities and does irreparable damage to morale.

The Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act removes this barrier to the career advancement opportunities of long-serving temporary seasonal employees in land management agencies. It gives temporary employees the opportunity to compete for agency positions on an equal footing with other federal employees if they've worked over four seasons (at least 24 months of service time) and their performance was satisfactory. This provides long-serving temporary employees with opportunity and their employing agencies with better applicant pools.

The bill is a common-sense, good government reform with no direct costs and significant payoffs. In addition, the bill authorizes the direct placement of temporary employees who have successfully performed the same job for over four seasons (24 months) into vacant positions that are identical to their temporary positions (i.e., same duties, qualification requirements, and location). This ensures continuity of service and retention of experienced employees at a time when federal workers are retiring in droves.

The Forest Service Council has worked tirelessly to develop, introduce, and lobby this measure, but a gridlocked Congress has failed to act. That is, until now. A number of prominent elected officials from both sides of the aisle have joined together to co-sponsor the bill. You can see a full list of co-sponsors in the box located right.

For more on our latest efforts to make this bill become law, visit www.nffe.org/tempseasonals.

The Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act Co-Sponsors

House:

Rep Bishop, Rob [UT-1]
 Rep Cartwright, Matt [PA-17]
 Rep Cole, Tom [OK-4]
 Rep Connolly, Gerald E. [VA-11]
 Rep DeFazio, Peter A. [OR-4]
 Rep Duffy, Sean P. [WI-7]
 Rep Huffman, Jared [CA-2]
 Rep Lowenthal, Alan S. [CA-47]
 Rep Miller, George [CA-11]
 Rep Moran, James P. [VA-8]
 Rep Pearce, Stevan [NM-2]
 Rep Pocan, Mark [WI-2]
 Rep Shea-Porter, Carol [NH-1]
 Rep Simpson, Michael K. [ID-2]
 Rep Young, Don [AK]

Senate:

Sen Tester, Jon [MT]
 Sen Mark Udall [CO]

Congress Could Adopt Yet Another Stopgap Spending Bill to Avoid Government Shutdown

(Note: This story was written on September 17, 2013)

For several years now, the United States Congress has failed to pass an actual budget to fund government operations. Instead, lawmakers in Washington have continually passed short-term stop-gap spending measures (known as continuing resolutions, or CRs) that more or less fund federal programs at the same level as they were funded the previous period or fiscal year. As we reach the end of fiscal year 2013, it appears Congress may act on yet another short-term CR instead of agreeing on a budget that adequately funds federal programs and reflects our nation's priorities. Congress is required to act on some form of spending legislation by September 30th to avoid a government shutdown on October 1st.

There are several problems with a stop-gap approach to funding government in the current budget environment. First, the cost of government service increases each year with inflation and population growth, so flat funding amounts to a cut in government services to the American people (and fewer jobs at federal agencies). Second, the impacts of roll-over budgets are magnified when they occur year after year, which they have in recent budget cycles. Third, flat budgets are woefully inadequate right now because of sequestration (automatic across-the-board budget cuts already enacted into law), which further decimates federal agency budgets. Fourth, rolling over the budget does not allow Congress to prioritize and make choices about which important programs to support, even when the need is overwhelming.

With precious little time left before the government's current funding measure expires (at the time of this writing on September 17th), the House Appropriations Committee released a draft CR to extend a \$968 billion funding bridge to underpin government operations through December 15th.

According to a draft released September 10th, the measure would hold spending for the vast majority of agencies at current levels, with some exceptions. Though the short-term nature and inadequate funding levels are a serious concern to federal workers, there is a silver lining: agencies would maintain the flexibility to prevent furloughs over this period.

Despite the obvious benefits of keeping the government open for business and preventing furloughs, this measure is woefully inadequate. Federal employees and the agencies they work for have been chronically underfunded by short-term, sporadic measures like this one for years now. If passed into law, this measure would do nothing but delay the inevitable conversation that Congress has avoided again and again: should the government continue to provide critical services to the American people, or not?

"Federal employees make this country work," said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. "Budget cuts and shutdown threats do nothing but undermine the great work these patriotic Americans do for our nation every day. There is nothing political about caring for a wounded veteran, keeping our drinking water safe, or protecting our border. Congress needs to quit the political posturing and help us do what we do best: make America great."



CLOSED



Union Member Activism Pays Off as DoD Furloughs Shrink from 22 to 6 Days

NFFE has taken part in countless campaigns over the past several years in its continual effort to protect the rights, compensation, and dignity of federal workers. Rarely, however, do these campaigns impact as broad an audience as that which was waged this summer: the campaign to end furloughs for hundreds of thousands Department of Defense (DoD) employees.

The tension was high and the stakes were even higher. When the sequester first hit the DoD's budget in early fiscal year 2013, the Department announced employees would be required to take a full 22 unpaid furlough days by year's end. In most cases, workers would be required to take one day of unpaid leave each week, meaning pay checks would come in 16 hours and hundreds of dollars shorter than usual for 11 pay periods.

For federal workers already feeling the pressure from three years of frozen pay, retirement cuts, and strained budgets, the

burden of furloughs would be the straw that broke the camel's back.

With Congress mired in partisan infighting and no apparent interest in reaching a compromise to avoid the furloughs, employees knew they couldn't change the minds of Congress without a fight.

That is when droves of Defense employees turned to NFFE, IAM, and other members of the Federal Workers Alliance asking what they could do to help. Within days, the Alliance had built an online forum where DoD employees, their families, and members of communities could share their stories of how a furlough would impact their livelihoods. Sure enough, within a matter of days, hundreds of concerned Americans left thousands of comments imploring Congress to act.

Meanwhile, NFFE, IAM, and other federal Unions were mobilizing members to contact the media, Congress, and others

in their community. They took the stories left in the online forum and brought them to key offices on Capitol Hill, pressuring them to do the right thing for these workers and their families. For weeks on end, federal employees, union representatives, and millions of others pressured Congress for change. Then, in late March, Congress finally bowed to the people's demands by giving DoD the ability to shift money between accounts and reduce scheduled furlough days from 22 to 14.

"This was the wake-up call that Congress needed," said NFFE Legislative Director Randy Erwin. "Federal workers and their union representatives were speaking up both in Washington, D.C. and in their home districts. Without so many people pitching into the effort, there is no way Congress would have acted."

Despite the small victory, every federal employee with bills to pay, children to send to school, and mouths to feed knew

that 14 days were still 14 days too many. Federal unions suspected that more could be done to shift resources at the Department so NFFE and others directed pressure at the Pentagon to do more for their dedicated employees.

After months of intense lobbying, in mid-May Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced that three more furlough days would be eliminated, bringing the total to just 11 days – only half the original total. At the time, Defense saw the 11 days as the final amount, and officially scheduled the mass furlough of over 650,000 workers starting in July.

Despite DoD digging their boots into the ground at 11 days, NFFE leadership remained defiant:

“This is a baby step in the right direction, but federal employees need a sprint,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan following Hagel’s announcement. “I don’t care if there are 22, 14, or 11 furlough days on the calendar – we will not rest until every furlough day is eliminated. The work these dedicated civilians do every day to support our troops is critical to our military readiness and national

security. Congress needs to get out of the way and let them do their jobs.”

In the coming months, little progress was made as NFFE, IAM, and others pressured both Congress and DoD to develop solutions to the impending furlough crisis. As May slipped into June, and June into July, the first furlough day was just a few days away when something incredible started to happen: federal employees came together to form a united front to eliminate the furloughs once and for all. As Congress was ending its 4th of July vacation, thousands of NFFE-IAM members started taking action.

The Furlough Red Zone Campaign, launched by the 20-union Federal Workers Alliance (FWA), was a national letter writing and call-in campaign designed to push Congress to end the furloughs. What started as a small operation snowballed into huge success both on Capitol Hill and in the press. In just over a week, the campaign netted over 7,000 individual letters to 430 Congressional offices. Coming from all 50 states, the letters sent the straightforward message that Congress needs to do their job and end the reckless furloughs.

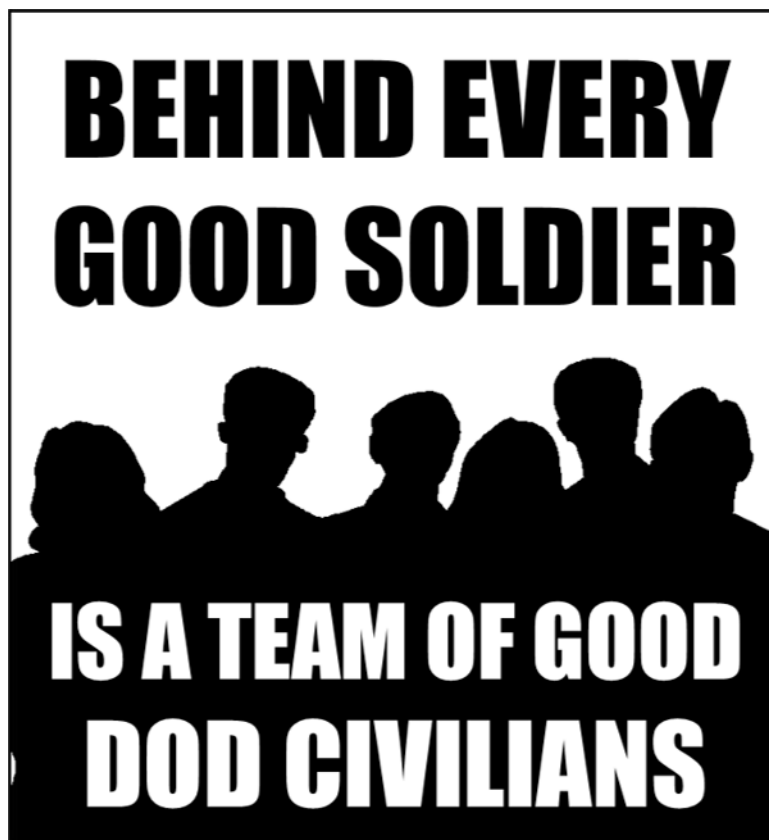
“Behind every good soldier is a team of good Defense civilians,” the letter read. “These are the dedicated men and women who support the mission of our troops abroad and defend our families against threats at home. These individuals need to be on the job – not on the couch.”

Amidst all of the actions federal workers took to raise awareness, the national media weighed in with a slew of stories highlighting the furloughs. In just a matter of days NFFE-IAM members began to appear in major publications such as the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*, and CNN, among others. Several Local leaders also took their stories to local papers and news channels, bringing their struggles straight to the living rooms of their friends and neighbors. In all, their stories reached millions of readers throughout the country, educating the wider public on the urgency to act against the furloughs.

In the weeks following the commencement of furloughs on July 8th, employees continued to bury Capitol Hill in letters, emails, and phone calls. The outpouring of grassroots advocacy led lawmakers to call for a serious review of the Department’s funding and what can be done to alleviate furloughs.

After a month of this relentless pressure from Defense employees and their union representatives, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced in early August that the Department would cancel five scheduled furlough days, effective immediately. The announcement marked a major victory for Defense employees who have stepped up the pressure on lawmakers and Defense leadership to do something about the ruinous furloughs.

“This is the perfect demonstration of what’s possible when workers come together as union brothers and sisters and work together to fight injustice,” said Dougan following the announcement. “Thanks to everyone across this union who poured countless hours into fighting this fight. We did not eliminate furloughs outright, but there is so much to be proud of. Now we can focus on righting this wrong and securing the back pay these workers deserve.”



continued on page 9

For the NFFE Locals who worked so hard to make this happen, the joy was palpable.

“Without your voices joined with ours, I am convinced that the furloughs would not have been cut short,” said NFFE Local 1442 President Deborah Witherspoon in a message to members. “A Union is about people standing up for what is right in a unified effort, and using their rights to lobby, free speech, file grievances and appeals, and to show the light of day on issues that are unjust.”

At the time of the decision, most Defense employees had already taken four furlough days, leaving just two more to satisfy the requirement. Overall, the reduction from 22 days to six saved hundreds and even thousands of dollars for each employee. What could have been the worst hour for these workers became one of their most triumphant. It speaks to the tenacity of the patriotic public servants and the amazing feats they are capable of accomplishing when they put their minds to it. Thank you to all who pitched in and fought the good fight.

With One Threat Down, New Challenges Emerge

Just a few short days after Secretary Hagel’s announcement, questions began to surface over how the Department would deal the second round of sequestration cuts set to hit the Department in fiscal year 2014. Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, known for his forthrightness on difficult subjects, was not shy to answer them.

In a recent interview with *USA Today*, Carter laid out the Department’s prospects plain and simple:

“We can’t rule out reductions in the civilian workforce and involuntary separations of military personnel,” Carter said. “That’s something none of us wants to do. But again if you have to have reductions this

steep you have to go where it is possible to get money that fast. Those are the most strategically and managerially sound places.”

Carter’s clear implication is that the looming \$50+ billion in sequestration cuts scheduled to hit the DoD in FY 2014 are simply too large to absorb without letting workers and service members go. The amount of people expected to be released is unclear, but the recently completed Defense Strategic Choices and Management Review report of spending alternatives offers some insights. According to the report, given tight budget caps and nine more years of steep sequestration cuts, the military might ultimately decrease by several hundred thousand service members. The Army could shrink from 540,000 to 380,000 and the Marine Corps from 195,000 to 150,000.

The results of such a drastic downsizing in the military and its negative impact on civilian employment would be devastating.

“Hacking away at our Defense workforce and military readiness is far from a strategically sound approach to cutting costs,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. “Defense must do whatever it takes to find savings elsewhere and protect its most valuable asset – its employees.”

Said Dougan, adding:

“These reckless cuts serve only to hurt federal workers, military families, and our national security. Everyone knows this, but Congress has still failed to act. Without leadership from Capitol Hill, it is up to us to demand action. We were successful in getting furloughs reduced. Now let’s finish the job and end sequestration once and for all.”



NFFE-IAM members from NFFE Local 2109 in Watervliet, New York protest furloughs of Defense workers.
(John Carl D’Annibale / Times Union)

Wildland Firefighter Joshua Northrup Starts Petition to End Reckless Cuts to Firefighting Budget



NFFE-IAM Member Joshua Northrup started an online petition to stop budget cuts for wildland firefighters that has received more than 115,000 signatures.

With fires burning hundreds of thousands of acres across the U.S., the need for a strong firefighting force is more apparent than ever. Thousands of federal firefighters, along with state and municipal allies, are putting their lives on the line to protect our national treasures, communities, and citizens. Despite their heroic efforts, a serious lack of resources is holding back the firefighting agencies from accomplishing their mission.

Arbitrary and irresponsible cuts in wildfire suppression have put our nation at risk. The sequester removed 500 firefighters and 50 engines from the ground, reducing firefighting agencies' capacity to respond to wildfires when they occur. And the administration's 2014 budget proposes a 24% reduction in hazardous fuels removal even after the House Appropriations Committee found that firefighting budgets across government are already underfunded by \$700 million.

“Please join me in asking our elected officials in Washington, D.C. to do the right thing for wildland firefighters and the communities we protect all across America,”

In August, Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell announced that the fire suppression budget had run dry prematurely. The announcement came just days before the National Interagency Fire Center raised its preparedness to a Level 5, meaning wildfires across the country “have the potential to exhaust all agency fire resources.” To keep firefighters on the fire line, the Forest Service must transfer \$600 million from other vital programs like reforestation, trails maintenance, timber harvesting, and forest and range management. To meet this emergency, even programs that reduce the risk of devastating wildfires have been raided.

For Joshua Northrup, an eighteen-year wildland firefighter and NFFE-IAM member, some of these cuts hit very close to home. “In Washington State’s Wenatchee River Ranger District where I work, we have suffered the loss of a 20 person hand crew and an engine in the last year alone, reducing our local initial attack forces by 30%,” says Northrup in his petition. “These cuts happened just months before the start of the Wenatchee River Complex fire which burned more than 45,000 acres. Were it not for the hazardous fuels treatments we conducted before the blaze, we may not have been able to stop it before reaching the city of Wenatchee.”

Northrup, who has worked on hotshot crews, a helicopter rappel crew, engines, and several hand crews over the years, decided it was time to act. He started a petition calling on elected leaders in Washington to stop the reckless cuts. To Northrup, these cuts were arbitrary and dangerous, putting the public he had sworn to protect at serious risk. In just over a month, over 115,000 Americans have agreed, signing the petition and making their voices heard. But this is just the beginning – we will need thousands more to stand up and speak out to get the resources our firefighters need to protect us.

“Please join me in asking our elected officials in Washington, D.C. to do the right thing for wildland firefighters and the communities we protect all across America,” said Northrup. “Demand that Congress return the funds taken by sequestration and fully fund fire suppression and hazardous fuels reduction activities in 2014. Sign our petition today.”

FEEA Suspends Furlough Loans Due to Exhaustion of Resources

For nearly 30 years, the Federal Employees Education and Assistance fund (FEEA) has distributed millions of dollars in no-interest emergency loans and scholarships to federal employees. Through thick and thin the organization has always managed to come through for federal employees in need. With widespread furloughs, pay freezes, and retirement cuts being inflicted on federal workers across America, however, that ability has crumbled.

This September, FEEA was forced to suspend offering no-interest loans due to the overwhelming volume of federal employees currently receiving assistance. The news came in spite of generous donations from the BlueCross/BlueShield Association, GEICO, and GEBA, and hundreds of last minute individual donations. Without FEEA to serve as a critical safety net for these workers, many are left wondering who they can turn to for help.

“FEEA’s Board and staff are distraught by the necessity of suspending new furlough loans to federal employees,” said FEEA Board President Bob Tobias. “It is always our goal to be able to assist every fed, every time, however, financial circumstances compel us to take a different path at this time. We remain hopeful that new donations and sponsorships will allow us to continue serving needy federal employees as sequestration continues and additional budget constraints threaten federal families.”

Since the start of FEEA’s fiscal year on May 1, 2013, emergency loan volume has nearly doubled each month, reaching a record high of more than \$235,000 out the door in August alone. Average loan volume for FEEA is less than \$50,000 per month. Total emergency loans in the first four months of the fiscal year topped \$500,000, or nearly 90% of annual loan volume for the past several years. This unprecedented need has created cash flow problems for the organization, which now must dramatically cut back new loans in order to remain solvent.

Employees who have recently submitted applications for furlough loans will receive an email from FEEA explaining the current situation. The charity will retain the applications of those it is unable to help at this time in hopes that the financial situation will improve and it will be able to re-evaluate those applications. FEEA will continue providing no-interest emergency loans to federal employees who meet FEEA’s general guidelines for financial need. Employees must be hav-

The screenshot shows the FEEA website with a red header and a blue sidebar. The main content area features a large banner for "Feds Helping Feds!" with a "Give Now" button. Below the banner is a "Disaster Relief" section with a "Get Help Now" button. The "The FEEA Blog" section contains several articles, including "FEEA's Shutdown Response" dated October 01, 2013, and "FEEA Saddened by Loss of Bill Bransford" dated September 30, 2013. The "Latest News" section includes "Federal News Radio - Government Shutdown: 4 Things Feds Should Know" and "Washington Post: The Fed Page - Navy Yard Employees Dealing with Emotional Trauma as they Return to Work".

“Donate Now to CFC # 11185!”

ing trouble paying for basic living needs like rent/mortgage or utilities due to emergency circumstances beyond their control that have created a significant drop in income or a considerable increase in expenses. Furloughed employees may still apply if they have other life circumstances beyond furloughs that have created the financial hardship. Those seeking FEEA loans should complete the regular Emergency Assistance application available at www.feea.org/furloughs.

Donations to FEEA’s General Fund are urgently needed in order for FEEA to resume providing assistance to furloughed employees and to prepare for continued sequestration-related cuts affecting federal employees as soon as October. Donations may be made via credit card on FEEA’s web site at www.feea.org/Give. Donations via check made out to “FEEA” may be sent to: FEEA Headquarters, 3333 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 300, Lakewood, CO 80227. Corporations interested in becoming FEEA sponsors should contact Robyn Kehoe at rkehoe@feea.org or 202-554-0007.

After Long Struggle, Downtown SAMs Finally Achieve First Contract

Nearly four years ago in July of 2009, 120 brave workers stood up to their company's difficult working conditions and voted to form a Union. Today NFFE is proud to announce that the Downtown SAMs (short for safety, hospitality, and maintenance employees) have officially ratified their contract, and are now full members of the National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW.

Organizing is the life blood of our Union. If we do not continue to organize, we will cease to exist. This new group of men and women had the courage to stand up and fight for their right to organize. This newly organized unit will bring strength and solidarity to the Union movement. The road to organizing is not an easy one. There were many times when it seemed like the Downtown SAMs would not win their right to representation. Standing steadfast even in the face of adversity, the Downtown SAMs were able to see it through to their first contract.

Under the new contract, Downtown SAMs will receive a general wage increase ranging from 6.5% to more than 10% over the course of the three-year agreement. Employees will also begin receiving a \$75/month transportation subsidy. In addition to the financial benefits, workers will also see 3.25 additional days of sick leave while longtime BID employees will receive an extra week of vacation leave. Finally, employees will have the protection of a just cause provision, ushering in a new era of employee rights at the Downtown BID.

"I am inspired by the resolve these men and women showed through the whole process," said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. "We are proud to have negotiated a solid first contract that will give these workers a most deserved increase in pay, leave, and improvements in working conditions."

The Downtown SAMs are employed by the non-profit Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) Corporation in Washington, D.C. They are the friendly folks in red you might see giving directions to tourists around train stations and landmarks. Others clean the streets of D.C. and report criminal activity in high-traffic areas. All in all, their job is to keep downtown Washington, D.C. clean, safe, and a pleasant place to live or visit.

Despite their great work revitalizing the Downtown D.C. area, their working conditions needed a little revitalization. Concerns over pay, leave, and a fair process for complaints went unheeded, leading the SAMs to approach NFFE National Business Representative Roosevelt Littlejohn, Jr. about organizing. Soon after, Littlejohn did exactly that, securing a successful vote in July of 2009. But this is just where the story begins.

"When they first contacted me about their working conditions, I couldn't just sit back and let it happen," said Littlejohn. "I was moved by the conditions these workers faced and dedicated myself to making things better. It was a long struggle, and we are so proud that they stuck it out and got the Union contract they deserve."

Through the last few years, the workers kept steadfast in their resolve for a better workplace and saw the fight all the way through to victory. Now, they are ready to begin a new era at the Downtown BID, securing for all current and future SAMs the dignity that comes with a Union contract.

Special thanks go out to all those brave SAMs who worked so hard, including Jennings (JR) Brown, Chester Fenton, Ethel Frye, David Hall, Ronald Lloyd, Jesse Marlow, Darrell Stone, John Wright, and the late Earl Garner. Thanks also to IAM Associate General Counsel Bill Haller and the dedicated men and women of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Metro Labor Council, especially Jos Williams, Chris Garlock, and Alya Solomon.

Young Federal Leaders: Looking Back and Planning for the Future

Young Federal Leaders (YFL) started as a modest effort to amplify the voices of our young union members and has quickly evolved into a mission to engage every NFFE-IAM unionist, regardless of age, in the task of protecting our great coalition of workers for generations to come. And while we realize that an undertaking of this magnitude will require passion and diligence from our elected officials and members throughout the country, as unionists, we understand that everyone's voice is valuable. We cannot stop our work until all of the diversity of our union is represented at the table.

In the last two years, we have made tremendous strides in our effort to build a young worker community through the YFL initiative. NFFE now boasts a young worker communications strategy, strategic plan, and a national committee comprised of some of our union's best and brightest members. Paired with our mentorship program and newly implemented YFL training sessions at the William W. Winpisinger Training Center, our young members are better equipped than ever before to make an impact on this Union. Although we've accomplished a great deal in a very short time, the work ahead of us is even more challenging and critical to accomplish.

YFL has made it its mission to move out into the field and establish local chapters throughout the country. We recognize that this work cannot be done over the phone or in an office; for YFL to plant deep roots, it must become a living breathing part of our Locals and our Councils. To be sure, its success and growth depends on every Local leader and member rolling up their sleeves and working to develop a young worker program for their home Local.

So what are you waiting for? Get started by working with your executive board and the NFFE National Office to start a Local

chapter, apply for a charter, or serve on YFL's National Committee.

Now is the time to take ownership of the challenging task at hand: building your Local's young worker community – the pay-off has never been higher! By engaging workers of all ages in your YFL chapter, your Local Lodge will be better able to cultivate knowledgeable, eager, and diligent members who will not only grow YFL, but your Local as a whole. Together, we will push ahead in our efforts to establish and strengthen Local chapters, develop a strategic messaging plan to reach out to young workers, and most importantly, nurture the voice of young unionists throughout the country.

In its short history, the YFL initiative has overcome some significant challenges. Creating a path where none exist is difficult work. It is thanks to all of the committed unionists, both young and old, green and experienced, and all those in between, that YFL has found so much success in such a short time. As the initiative continues to grow, we will undoubtedly encounter more changes and challenges. One of those changes we are about to encounter is a changing of the guards in the NFFE national YFL coordinator position. Amy Burns will no longer serve in this capacity as she is moving out into the field to serve as a national business representative. Filling in behind her is Kalia Vang, NFFE's newest staff assistant and member of the family. With a background in activism and advocacy, and a degree in government from Georgetown University, Kalia is more than capable of taking on the challenge of growing our YFL initiative.

Please welcome Kalia and assist her in her work moving our young worker initiative forward!



On the Road

with Amy Burns



An initially unlikely voice for labor, Amy Burns has emerged as a zealous, invaluable leader at NFFE and the greater Labor Movement. Reflecting on her start at NFFE, she explains how her dedication to the movement has come full circle, “I am the product of a single mother who is a federal employee and Union member. Although my mother was involved, I did not appreciate labor Unions for helping working class families like my own because I wasn’t aware of them and what they do. In college, I worked for the Utah Democratic Party in search of a way to make progressive change. I found NFFE to be the vehicle for progressive change.” Through Burns’ leadership at NFFE, establishing the Young Federal Leaders (YFL) initiative and providing substantial support to staff, she has found the Labor Movement to be her calling.

Since Burns’s start at NFFE in October of 2010 as the office manager and special assistant, she has worked tirelessly to help NFFE achieve its mission. Burns now joins our organizing efforts as a national business representative servicing the Midwest region, which covers states from Minnesota to Tennessee. From her base in Louisville, Kentucky, Burns will serve and represent 24 NFFE Locals.

In this new capacity, Burns will work more closely with Locals to protect and advance the interests of federal employees. She will provide service including representation and education to members and Local officials. NFFE is committed to equipping people with the skills and education to do the work necessary to represent its members. Burns is determined to enhance communications and build partnerships and membership in the Midwest region, believing strongly that “the more members we have the stronger our voices.”

Notably, in her previous role, Burns took the initiative to transform our membership base by actively engaging and empowering underrepresented, young workers. She leaves behind a legacy in the YFL initiative which will now be undertaken by our new staff assistant, Kalia Vang. Burns’s personal story inspired her to begin YFL, realizing that there were so

many young people like her who were unaware of the impact and importance of the Labor Movement and young workers’ stake in it: “There is a new generation of unionists who are passionate and hungry for change. It’s important to preach to them the gospel and what it means.”

Burns remains a prominent, fresh voice for young workers despite her transition as business representative: “Although I will no longer have the opportunity to work closely with YFL, it is still important to me and I plan to be involved in working with other Labor Unions in our community to bring young worker issues to the forefront.” In her new role as BR, Burns remains committed to ensuring that federal employees have a voice and that young people have a seat at the table.



Tens of Thousands March on Washington to Reclaim the Dream

On Saturday, August 24th, NFFE-IAM celebrated the 50th year anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Half a century after Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech, NFFE-IAM members marched with tens of thousands on the National Mall to commemorate the progress brought forth by the historic march and to remind our country that the work is not done. Until the rights, welfare, and safety of workers are secured, King’s dream and the dream of millions of Americans remain unfulfilled.

NFFE-IAM members’ presence echoed the significant progress made since the 1963 march. The march triggered momentum resulting in the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits the discrimination in hiring based on race, national origin, and sex, and the Voting Rights Act. This law implemented enforcement measures to ensure that people can freely and safely exercise the right to vote. Our NFFE-IAM family today is an inclusive and diverse one thanks to these laws that uphold the equal treatment of all people.

The anniversary March on Washington was a pivotal moment for NFFE as we reflect on the Labor Movement’s history and the work we have left to accomplish. In 1963, over 200,000 marched in support of set demands, half of which had economic implications. Many marched in favor of a national minimum wage, a federal program to provide training and decent paying jobs for the unemployed, and the protection of wages.

Within the last three years, federal employees have incurred \$114 billion in cuts to their pay and retirement security. As a result of sequestration, thousands of federal workers have been laid off and hundreds of thousands more face mandatory unpaid furloughs. Federal employees, who have already experienced three consecutive years of pay freezes, will experience a 20 percent pay cut for the period of time they are furloughed. Today, NFFE continues to strive to protect our workers and advance their interests for the betterment of families



IAM members march on Washington on the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

highly affected by the consequences of sequestration and recent attacks on federal employees.

NFFE continues to support its employees in the current civil rights struggle to gain benefits for same-sex partners. Under current law, domestic partners of federal employees are ineligible to receive insurance, family leave, survivor annuities, and other benefits for which spouses are eligible. Since benefits comprise a great deal of federal employee compensation, this disparity effectively denies federal employees with domestic partners equal pay for equal work. NFFE strongly supports legislation to offer federal employees in same-sex domestic partnerships access to equal benefits.

As we move forward inspired by the March on Washington and King’s Dream for America, NFFE vows to represent and work for the betterment and security of our employees and their families and subsequently, our larger communities. We have a ways to go to secure the rights and opportunities of federal employees, but we remain vigilant. The fight continues on for jobs and freedom in the pursuit of the American Dream.

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE



William D. Fenaughty
National
Secretary-Treasurer

Writers/Editors
Cassie Bond
Amy Burns
Brittany Cardinal
Randy Erwin
Drew Halunen
Kalia Vang

William R. Dougan
National President

National Vice Presidents

Rob Arnold
Mark Davis
Patricia La Sala
Elizabeth McDargh
John R. Obst
Tim Ostrowski
Eric Plimmer



James N. Davis
Assistant Directing
Business Representative

**National Federation of
Federal Employees**
805 15th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-216-4420
202-898-1861 Fax