

N.A.A.E.

National Association of Agriculture Employees

NEWSLETTER



Inside This Issue...

A Message from Our President

Tough Times for Government Employees and Labor Unions

Navigating with Your Phone is a Touchy Subject

NAAE Convention – Perspectives from my 1st Convention

The Legal Side - NAAE Prevails in Arbitration over Unresolved

Grievance Dispute & Unions Ban Together to Overturn Trump EOs

NAAE Flash! - Uniform Update, PPQ Ready! & Telework Update

OUR Web Site <http://www.aginspectors.org>

This Newsletter is distributed free to NAAE members & to members of the House and Senate Committees



A Message from Our President

Mike Randall

National

In this newsletter you will read articles about Administration efforts to throttle our voices directly through policies (rescission of telework for one) and Presidential Executive Orders (three real “beauts”). These actions represent efforts to tamp down federal employee unions and make it difficult if not impossible for the unions to represent employees in their workplaces—defend employees from unjust actions—even speak to our congressional representatives in betterment of our workplace. Other efforts include attempts to turn tenured federal employees with due process rights into “at-will” employees who can be fired at the drop of a hat or for “improper” political attitude. These matters are being heard by the courts. Hopefully, the courts will send us a message of moderation.

I am writing to you about the President’s budget and legislative agenda as communicated through Jeff Pon, the Federal Office of Personnel Management’s Director. The Presidential Agenda contains elements to strike directly at federal employees through their pay and benefits. Congress sets our pay in the yearly budget process. Despite the boasts of the Administration of our Nation’s great economic growth and low unemployment rate and despite acknowledged increases in consumer prices (particularly, health care), the President has determined that federal employees do not deserve and will not get a pay raise for 2019.

2019 Pay Increase

The President proposed a freeze on any pay raises for 2019.

The House of Representatives neglected to address a raise for 2019 in its Budget. The Senate backed an average 1.9% pay increase in their budget. The ultimate amount (if any) will be decided in conference between the House and Senate, AND will depend upon the President’s willingness to sign the bill into law.

The OPM’s own Federal Salary Council still indicates federal sector pay lags the private sector pay by 32%. We have endured pay freezes over the past Administration/Congresses and meager raises. When will we have suffered enough that our pay is on par? When we are paying the government to have our jobs!

Fresh off big tax “cuts” to benefit the 1%ers, it is time again for Congress to raid its favorite ready-at-hand piggy-bank—federal employees benefits.

The President’s agenda for federal employee benefits has been adopted by the leadership of the House Budget Committee. Fortunately for us, there has been considerable bipartisan opposition in the House to most of these proposals, summarized below.

The original evil plan was to attach the below changes in law to the 2019 National Defense Appropriations Act—a “must pass” bill full of funding for the Defense Department and its weapons programs. This bill was signed into law on August 13, but *sans* the awful employee provisions. This “omission” just means that someone in Congress at a later date will need to find another place to sneak in these benefit-cutting provisions. The House Budget Committee wants to include these benefit cuts in this current Budget. Nothing in the Committee’s language says anything about “grandfathering” any of the following retirement proposals—the Committee wants these cuts to fall where they may—even if you’ve already earned that pension. **EVEN IF YOU’VE ALREADY RETIRED!**

Features of the Retirement Proposals

Use high-five instead of the current high-three years of income to calculate your pension.

.....I can’t see how this one matters much if you never get a yearly raise, at least not in the recent past.

Eliminate the FERS special supplement. This supplement is paid to take the place of your Social Security payment if you retire after your minimum retirement age (56 or 57), until your Social Security payment begins at age 62.

For many, this will mean not retiring until age 62.

Eliminate yearly cost of living increases to your FERS pension. Currently, pensions receive a yearly COLA based upon the rate of inflation. CSRS retirees shouldn’t feel left out.

Administration-backed proposals call for reducing CSRS COLAs by .5% each year. *It is easy to see that a pension that does not receive adjustments for inflation will quickly lose buying power to the point of not being able to pay for a loaf of bread in few years—especially with recent trillion-dollar-a-year deficits.*

Increase employee contributions to FERS retirement. One percentage point per year until 7.25% is the yearly deduction. Those hired after 2013 are already making FERS contributions of 3.1%.

Let’s see, FICA/Medicare tax is roughly 7.5%, Federal Income tax is somewhere between 10-33%, State and Local taxes are another hunk, and now I have to pay an additional 6.5% to receive a pension that isn’t adjusted for inflation!!?? Fabaceae and Oryzae for me!

Regardless of whether these benefit cuts make it into law this year, as long as this congressional leadership and Administration are in office, these proposals will come up again and again, until strong-arm tactics, threats of government shutdowns, and nasty rhetoric against you and me—hard working government employees – eventually force this garbage into law.

Other Proposals

The above represent some of the more painful proposals, depending upon where you are in your career. Other wonderful gnawing features include: 1) Adding a year to each step increase waiting period so that progression to the step-10 takes 27 years instead of 18 years; and 2) Combining sick and annual leave into one type of leave, adjusted so you get less total leave during the year.

What can we do?

The first thing we should do is vote in the primaries and in the General Election. Vote for people who RESPECT federal employees and the difficult jobs we do. Do not vote for people who do not believe that federal employees are a valuable asset to this country, or for people who

disparage and demean federal workers, and for those who believe federal employees do not deserve fair compensation for the jobs they do.

If you can't even do this ballot-box "fix," you may not belong here. NAAE members take our work and the Agency Mission seriously. Around 75% of the issues we bring forward as a union are not about our own employee working conditions, but rather are about improving PPQ service delivery, support of the Agency Mission, and making the government function better, more efficiently and effectively.

Second, stick with NAAE! Support NAAE! NAAE will always be listening to and monitoring the changes in government and in our workplaces. We will pass this information on to you. We will always be engineering work-arounds together with you in a collective effort to negotiate our way through the temporary setbacks the current politics present. NAAE remains ready, willing, and able to take on the legal challenges necessary to fight injustice.

Get your co-workers to join NAAE. By far, the greatest part of our dues – the part not necessary to pay for paper clips and stamps – stands by in the NAAE treasury waiting for the right case and the right issue to take on in order to make our legal points. NAAE is a rank-and-file union composed of volunteers—there is no "union salary." We are our own representatives; as such, there are no outside giant-union paid staffers to step in when the Agency tries to curb or prohibit our official and representational time needed to protect and, when possible, advance the interests of the federal employees in our PPQ bargaining unit. We must school ourselves and be ready for these Administration obstructions to union and employee rights.

As for these junk Administration and Congressional proposals--let's hope none of this bad stuff happens. As we count our blessings up to new appropriations for the new fiscal year, we are particularly grateful for the most VOCAL union members, those who represent NAAE (and your co-workers) on committees, those who get involved with NAAE on the national and local levels, those who keep the conversation with Management going (even when Management has been ORDERED from above to pretend we don't exist), and all of you who participate in NAAE meetings and on Union-Management committees and who vote in NAAE elections.

Again, get involved with the union—this is your path to a VOICE in how things play out! Perhaps you live in a state or congressional district where your one vote may be a whoopee cushion in a hurricane as far as changing the status quo. Let those representatives know exactly how you feel by calling, writing, or visiting them if they don't represent YOUR views.

THINGS CAN CHANGE

Tough Times for Government Employees and Labor Unions Today: But Here's The Historical Perspective

Make no mistake – the attitude and actions of the current Administration are much less friendly to us today, justifying its position under the lofty-sounding guise of economy, efficiency and customer service. I personally don't doubt that while they *may mean well*, they have chosen to ignore, even trample on, many of our rights as federal employees. In addition, they forget we, too, are tax payers and customers of many U.S. government programs.

Let's be honest. We all know a few of our fellow employees who we feel 1) didn't deserve that award, 2) didn't have enough program knowledge / experience to have gotten that promotion, or 3) are slackers who don't do their work, an "omission" repeatedly ignored by management.

<http://WWW.AGInspectors.org>

So there is some truth in these criticisms, and admittedly much room for systemic reform of the civil service system. But the higher-ups ignore many of the root causes for these problems. Just a few that come to my mind are 1) supervisors who aren't well suited to supervise people, a skill that can seldom be taught, 2) managers who have climbed the ladder so fast and yet know so little, a deficiency everyone sees except the selecting official, and 3) my personal favorite, inability or unwillingness of managers to separate professional opinion from personal opinion in dealing with subordinates, an insidious bias guaranteed to incite employee resentment and add to the perception of corruption in the process of management. **Really** there should be an entire course in Fundamentals of APHS Human Resources Management (FAHRM) for exposing and weeding out #3 alone!

Because of the well-publicized May 25, 2018 attack from the Administration on employees and their rights through three Executive Orders (EO 13836, EO 13837, and EO 13839) – see Kim Mann's accompanying article in this issue – more than a dozen federal labor unions have joined together to file a lawsuit against the Trump Administration to overturn these EOs. On Wednesday, July 25, U.S. District Court Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson heard oral arguments from Union and Administration attorneys on the Unions' motion to declare these EOs unlawful. Judge Jackson had this to say about the Administration's position during oral argument, according to *Government Executive*:

"You were very careful in citing the 'effective operation of government' aspect of the law, but that's only one aspect Congress was concerned about when they wrote [the Civil Service Reform Act] Congress makes it very clear that it believes effective unions—and collective bargaining—are *in the public interest*. But these EOs are about half of that balance and not the other." (Emphasis added.)

Here comes the history lesson part. What Judge Jackson is referring to appears in a series of other earlier EOs, some issued by Republican presidents, ultimately shaping the current Labor Management Relations structure NAAE and APHS/PPQ operate under today. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy issued EO 10988, titled "Employee-Management Cooperation in the Federal Service"; in 1969, EO 11491 (President Nixon) included Unfair Labor Practice regulations and established Federal Labor Relations Council and the Federal Services Impasses Panel; in 1975, EO 11838 (President Ford) expanded collective bargaining rights to include agency regulations, mid-contract changes, third-party dispute resolution and secret ballots; and, then in 1977, Congress, under President Jimmy Carter's direction, recognized the need for a more comprehensive reform of the civil service system. It passed the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Title VII of that Act addresses labor-management relations. There, Congress made its intentions clear:

The Congress finds that—

(1) experience in both private and public employment indicates that the statutory protection of the right of employees to organize, bargain collectively, and participate through labor organizations of their own choosing in decisions which affect them—

(A) safeguards the public interest;

(B) contributes to the effective conduct of public business; and

(C) facilitates and encourages the amicable settlements of disputes between employees and their employers involving conditions of employment; and

(2) the public interest demands the highest standards of employee performance and the continued development and implementation of modern and progressive work practices to facilitate and improve employee performance and the efficient accomplishment of the operations of the Government.

Therefore, labor organizations and collective bargaining in the civil service are in the public interest.

Judge Jackson gets it, even if the Trump Administration does not. We must hope her forthcoming decision on the legality of the three May 25, 2018 EOs, expected by the time this Newsletter reaches you, continues to carry out that congressional intent and rejects the Administration's latest efforts to take away those fundamental rights, *your rights*.

Thank you for your time, attention and your membership in NAAE.

Susan Kostelecky

National Vice President

Navigating with Your Phone is a Touchy Subject

If someone asks you to hold their mobile phone for a minute, think twice. Why? Not just because dropping one could make it an expensive paper weight, but it could be hazardous to your health. Cell phones have 18 times more bacteria than toilet handles. Literally they are flush with pathogens. 9 out of 10 people use their phones in the bathroom. Another way to "stream"? Then without further thought 40 percent take that same phone to the dinner table. It puts a new spin on "what's for dinner?" Unappetizing to say the least.

In researching this article, I found mobile phones emit radiation which can cause insomnia, headaches and confusion. Silly me. I thought it was global warming making me feel this way. 25 percent use their phones during church/religious services. Pray that no one sees you streaming Jude Law in "Young Pope" during Mass. 25 Percent use them during school board meeting. You'd think they would have learned not to do this by now. All these are facts. ^{1/2/}

Now what are the facts on iPhone navigation in our Government Owned Vehicles (GOVs)? ^{3/ 4/ 5/}
^{6/} Here are the facts I have pulled for this article:

At the bottom of the article, "Distracted Driving Could Get You Fired-or EVEN Killed" by PPQ Safety and Health Cross Functional Group ("PPQ & You" article),^{4/} citing Regulation 5400-007, Text Messaging While Driving, is this statement: **"IMPORTANT: APHIS prohibits GOV drivers from using a cell phone as a navigation device."** I cannot seem to validate this statement in APHIS policies or regulations. Am I reaching out to the wrong sources? As of the writing of this article, I cannot find the source for this information.

Everyone refers to **Departmental Regulation 5400-007** OPI: Office of Procurement and Property Management, Property Management Division). Let's look at Departmental Regulation 5400-007, TEXT Messaging While Driving. Here is the relevant excerpt:

"Texting or text messaging means reading from or entering data into any handheld or other electronic device (including, but not limited to, cell phones, navigational tools, laptop computers or other electronic devices), including for the purpose of Short Message Service (SMS) texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, obtaining navigational information or engaging in any other form of electronic data retrieval or electronic data communication. The term does not include the use of a cell phone or other electronic device for the limited purpose of entering a telephone number to make an outgoing call or answer an incoming call, unless this practice is prohibited by state or local law." ***"The term also does not include glancing at or listening to a navigational device that is secured in a commercially designed holder affixed to the vehicle, provided that the destination and route are programmed into the device either before driving or while stopped in a location off the roadway where it is safe and legal to remain stationary".***

Please review the information in the regulation and speak to your local supervisor if you still have any questions. Just don't call me! Since it's like someone else's cell phone; I am not going to touch it. It could be hazardous to my health and well-being.

Resources:

- 1/ Edward Cardenas, Verizon
- 2/ Dish Zaugg: 16 interesting facts about cell Phones
- 3/ Departmental regulation 5400-007
- 4/ Distracted Driving Could Get You Fired-or Even Killed By PPQ Safety and Health Cross Functional Working Group (PPQ & You Newsletter April 2018)
- 5/ Navigation Devices, Government Vehicles, and You! By PPQ Safety and Health Cross Functional Working Group (PPQ & You Newsletter February 2017)
- 6/ Memorandum Dated 4/4/2013 Marilyn L. Holland. Government Owned Vehicle (GOV) Misuse (revised.)

NAAE 2018 Convention: Perspectives from My First Convention

I have been a dues paying member of NAAE for some time now, but my involvement in the union has been passive. However, during this past NAAE election cycle, I was asked to help out in the role of Chairman of the Election committee. I accepted the task because all over the country, in multiple industries, there are attacks on unions. Rights are being stripped and unions are being left toothless. What can one person do when the rights of workers are being dissolved 1000 miles away? The only way to make a difference is to be involved. I have wanted to be more involved in NAAE and this was my opportunity.

This was a challenging, yet rewarding task. I won't lie and say it was an easy task. It was time consuming and mundane folding ballots and addressing envelopes. I was happy to do it because it was my way of being involved to make NAAE work. The other way for all dues paying

members to help is by voting. Less than 10% of members voted in this election cycle. I would highly encourage all members to participate by voting and letting NAAE and management hear your voice.

As a result of being the Chairman of the Election committee, I had the opportunity to attend my first NAAE Convention to present the results of the election to the NAAE Executive Committee. The first day of the convention was a closed session, not including managers or labor relations. It was an excellent opportunity to meet the executive committee members and discuss NAAE business. Although the Executive committee has regular teleconference meetings, these do not replace the amount of work and networking that takes place in a live meeting.

After these closed sessions, the executive committee met with managers and labor relations to discuss ongoing issues in PPQ. It was also a time to ask a set of questions, including NAAE Member questions who submitted them in advance. In attendance during this session were Osama El-Lissy, Deputy Administrator of Plant Protection and Quarantine and Carlos Martinez, Executive Director of Field Operations in PPQ. This was my favorite part of the convention, because these managers were asked a long list of questions from employees that ranged from budget, hiring, uniforms, position descriptions and many other issues facing PPQ employees. My take-home from the convention is that I had not previously been involved at a level where I can play a part and have my voice heard when bargaining major issues with management. Seeing management show up and take the questions seriously showed me that there is strength in numbers. Don't forget: The boss needs you, you don't need him.

Nathan Cottrell, Entomologist and NAAE Communications Specialist

The Legal Side

By: Kim Mann Esq., NAAE General Counsel

I. NAAE Prevails In Arbitration Over Unresolved Grievance Dispute.

It is indeed the very rare grievance that NAAE and PPQ are unable to resolve between themselves without the assistance of a neutral third party. None in the recent past; however, that streak of cooperation has come to an end. In October 2016, NAAE filed a grievance on behalf of seven bargaining unit employees who the Agency had declared, only months earlier, were no longer qualified for their current positions as Grade-11 GS-401 PPQ Officers. Not qualified, according to the Agency, because they lacked sufficient college credits when the Agency first hired them some 20 years earlier. This Agency ruling of "unqualified" disregards the fact they had taken all the college courses the Agency's HR staff had told them they needed to qualify and had devoted the next 20+ years of their professional careers to providing dedicated service to PPQ, receiving promotion after promotion and award after award. The Agency notified them they could not keep their GS-11-401 jobs unless they went back to college and obtained the course credits the Agency claimed they lacked in order to qualify for their positions.

NAAE and PPQ management were unable to resolve this grievance challenging the Agency's treatment of the seven BUEs. NAAE, therefore, invoked binding arbitration, taking the dispute to a neutral third-party arbitrator. The arbitrator heard the grievance in January 2018 and issued his decision in early May 2018. **NAAE and all seven grievants won!** The arbitrator

ruled the Agency had violated the law by failing to apply an OPM policy known as the “add-on” rule to remedy the grievants’ situation. This rule eliminates the right of federal agencies to look back to reassess their employees’ educational qualifications once they have been placed in a job series. The violation of this OPM law effectively nullified the Agency’s October 2016 pronouncement declaring all seven grievants not qualified for their current positions and one grievant not qualified for a promotion to a GS-12 TS vacancy for which he had been selected. The arbitrator’s award directed the Agency to remedy its violation of law, ordering the Agency to correct its records to reflect that all seven grievants are qualified and to grant the one grievant his GS-12 promotion retroactive to the date he had been selected, May 2016, with back pay.

The arbitrator’s award is not yet final. The Agency has appealed the arbitrator’s decision to the Federal Labor Relations Authority (“FLRA”) in Washington, DC. NAAE has filed its reply, urging FLRA to uphold the arbitrator award. FLRA is expected to act upon the appeal sometime in the next six to 12 months.

II. Unions Ban Together To Overturn Trump EOs.

The Trump Administration has decided to pursue back-door civil service reform in the federal sector through what it hopes are bullet-proof executive orders (“EOs”). U.S. presidents have extremely broad authority unilaterally to issue EOs without Congressional approval as long as they do not violate existing federal law. Seizing upon this unique power, Trump, on May 25, 2018, issued three EOs seemingly designed to emasculate federal unions, undercutting the rights of federal employees, and to drastically curtail the amount of “official time” unions and their elected officials may devote to conducting union activities representing bargaining unit employees.

One EO would limit Performance Improvement Plans (known as PIPs) to 30 days, enable agencies to mete out discipline without the need to discipline consistently, prioritize crediting employee performance over seniority when agencies conduct Reductions-in-Force, and take away employee rights to grieve or contest their performance ratings or incentive pay or awards. Another EO directs agencies to reopen and renegotiate existing union contracts hoping to “increase performance, increase accountability, reduce waste, and increase their ability to serve the American people.” The third EO would limit the official time employees may use for their representational duties to 25% of their duty time, require agencies to charge unions “rent” for use of office space and government equipment and to stop covering union travel expenses, and direct unions and employees to cut back on lobbying Congress and using official time to pursue grievances against their agencies.

The large federal unions – AFGE, NTEU, and NFFE, plus 12 others – filed separate lawsuits in Washington, DC to block these EOs from going into effect. A federal court judge has combined these suits into one and committed to handling it on an expedited basis, promising a final decision on the merits by August 24, 2018. That decision will be appealable to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

These EOs, particularly the one restricting official time to 25%, would be devastating for NAAE if allowed to stand. Unlike the large unions suing the Trump

Administration to overturn the EOs, NAAE is a small, rank-and-file union whose representational duties are carried out by its elected officials, all of whom are full-time PPQ employees, PPQ Officers and Technicians. After NAAE bargained with PPQ management over the amount of official time reasonably needed to carry out its statutory duties, the resulting contract provides most NAAE national officers more than 25% of their duty time as “official time” to represent the PPQ bargaining unit. For instance, Mike Randall, NAAE President, as well as the NAAE National Treasurer, Secretary, and Eastern Region VP, have each been allocated 50% of their duty time to conduct union representational activities on official time.

If this EO succeeds in limiting these NAAE officers to one-half (or less) of their current allotment of official time, they will be unable adequately to carry out their representational duties. This is, of course, what the current Administration hopes will be the consequence. If NAAE also has to start paying rent at fair market value for use of Agency office space, telephones, and computers, as another EO would require, NAAE likely will be forced to increase dues, last raised about 10 years ago. Again, this is exactly what the Trump Administration hopes to accomplish, believing it will lead to significant losses of union members and union representational power.

NAAE reached out to NTEU and AFGE offering to assist them in their litigation to block these EOs from going into effect, proposing to intervene in their cases or submit supporting “briefs.” Because these cases are moving through the federal court so swiftly, it is doubtful NAAE’s assistance can come in time. We will let you know the outcome of this important litigation and its impact upon NAAE once it becomes known, sometime around September 1, 2018.

THE END???

**No! We must continue to Fight
Now More Than Ever! Encourage Your
Co-Workers to Join. There’s Strength
In Numbers!**

NAAE NEWS FLASH!

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURE EMPLOYEES



NATURAL DISASTERS PROMPTS CREATION OF A NEW COMMITTEE

Recently a variety of natural disasters have occurred that have adversely affected a large number of NAAE's bargaining unit employees, and they have affected the entire PPQ family. During the National Association of Agriculture Employees (NAAE) National Convention held in Rapid City, South Dakota in May 2018, several employees discussed the real life impact on their families and showed images of the hurricanes' destruction of Puerto Rico. Their stories had a big effect on attendees. It is because of that effect that we chose disaster relief and impact as one of the primary consultation topics to pursue with Deputy Administrator Osama El-Lissy and the managers in attendance. The employees brought up the fact that the Agency's response was very limited at best and its assistance to PPQ employees very minimal during the preparation for and aftermath of natural disasters, such as Hurricane Charlie that hit Houston and Hurricane Maria that hit Puerto Rico. Because of these inadequacies, NAAE wants to *effect change* in PPQ in how these weather events are handled in the near future.

Management was very willing to listen to employees' concerns and consider the possibility of assisting employees, not only in getting back to work, but also in recovering personally to the extent allowed by government rules and regulations. It recently convened the Emergency Planning Template Meeting to discuss, not just hurricane related emergencies, but any natural disaster that might affect our bargaining unit employees. This includes earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, blizzards, volcanoes and more.

NAAE chose four bargaining unit employees to attend based upon their personal experiences in dealing with natural disasters. The group made some progress and have assigned priorities to some of the almost 40 action items. Please know how very important this endeavor is to NAAE. Please send comments, before/during/after suggestions to your NAAE Rep. We want YOU to be **PPQ Ready!**

UPDATE—Telework Negotiations

National negotiations between PPQ and NAAE over telework began on August 6, 2018. PPQ's negotiator claims that only a *very small percentage* of the NAAE bargaining unit is affected by the new USDA Telework Policy. He claims that very few BUEs have scheduled telework more than 1 day per week. While that statistic *may be* accurate, it will have a HUGE impact on those who do have a routine telework agreement and have planned their lives around telework and work schedules.

As we work through each of our negotiation proposals, we **NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU** on the impact that going to a maximum of 1 day per week for telework will have on your professional and personal lives. Please read the USDA Telework Policy Q & A document and think about how it might impact YOU!

If a natural disaster strikes your community, reach out to your friends, neighbors, and complete strangers. Lend a helping hand.

Marsha Blackburn, BrainyQuotes.com

In This Issue

- PPQ Ready!
- TELEWORK
- UNIFORMS
- NAAE FACT SHEET - Post & Distribute
- Quick Contacts

UNIFORM NEWS

On 7/17/2018 the PPQ Uniform Committee met in Riverdale, MD. The PPQ Uniform Committee consists of two representatives of NAAE and two from NAPPQM, facilitated by the Contracting Officers Representative who is stationed in Riverdale. The committee represents approximately 2040 uniform users with an estimated \$1,199,890.00 spent in 2017. A large part of this year's meeting was taken up with discussion of the APHIS Uniform Work Group and what this might entail for the PPQ uniform user.

As outlined in the recent email from the Associate Deputy Administrator on 7/26/2018, APHIS, through the Uniform Work Group, is moving to standardize uniform offering across all APHIS programs. The APHIS Uniform Work Group was created at the suggestion of the Program Leaders Group (PLG) and tasked with developing and implementing standardized uniform offerings. The Uniform Work Group consists of one individual from each APHIS program that utilizes uniforms: AC, IS, MRPBS, PPQ, VS, WS. As the largest user of uniforms (followed by WS), PPQ is the model used as a starting point; we also have far and away the most organized, comprehensive uniform policy. As it stands now, our contract vendor HTC will take on all APHIS uniform offerings. In addition to PPQ uniforms, HTC presently provides offerings to Forest Service, GIPSA, and AMS. More on this topic as it develops.

The Uniform Committee has also been working on development of a PPQ Uniform SharePoint site. We plan on rolling it out at the FY changeover. Included on the SharePoint site will be FAQs, the catalog, and a Uniform Exchange section. All users are invited to visit the site as soon as it goes live. Please watch your email for updates.

On a final note, we on the committee receive many recommendations and suggestions on uniform items that could or should be added, often very specific to brand and model. The problem with these items is often that they are out of compliance with federal procurement law. Under GSA all vendors are required to comply with the Trade Agreements Act (TAA). This means all products listed must be manufactured or "substantially transformed" in a "designated country". These "designated countries" are composed of:

WTO Government Procurement Agreement Countries

Free Trade Agreement Countries

Least Developed Countries

Caribbean Basin Countries

We are not allowed to provide items that don't meet this requirement, which means anything made in China for example. Please see <http://gsa.federalschedules.com/resources/taa-designated-countries/> for further information.

Don Anderson

NAAE Uniform Committee Representative

National Association of Agriculture Employees ("NAAE")

Fact Sheet (MAY 2018)

What is the purpose of NAAE?

NAAE represents all member in the bargaining unit, dues paying or not. Federal employees not covered by a bargaining unit are "at will employees" and are not entitled to any union representation or the rights, protection, and other benefits of the union bargaining agreement.

For example: As a member of a bargaining unit, you may have a union representative present if you find yourself faced with possible disciplinary action.

National President

Mike Randall
Honolulu, Hawaii
808-838-2705 mikeran@aloha.net

National Vice President

Susan Kostecky (North Carolina)
919-221-6258
spkostecky@gmail.com

Western Region V.P.

Willis Gentry (Texas)
956-726-2258
willis.e.gentry@aphis.usda.gov

Eastern Regional V.P.

Julie Orr (Georgia)
404-260-7838
juliefayeorr@gmail.com

National Treasurer:

Jim Triebwasser 612-919-9029 triewas2000@yahoo.com

National Secretary:

Trish Claves 520-285-5404 pimahourse@hotmail.com

ER VP Assistant:

Fernando Lugo 787-710-7339

Western Regional Assistant VP

Kathy Ortega 310-955-3307 kathywr63@hotmail.com

At-Large-VP

Paul Hodges 504-461-4225 naaeph@hotmail.com

At-Large VP assistant:

Terrence Noda 808-772-0234

VP for Safety and Health:

Mark Segall 281-982-9545

Communications Specialist:

Nathan Cottrell 972-574-2018

NAAE Represents:

Plant Protection and Quarantine Employees, specifically:

1. All permanently employed professional PPQ Officers
2. All SITC Officers
3. All permanently employed nonprofessional employees of PPQ other than clerical, secretarial, and administrative personnel.

NAAE represented series include:

GS 0150 GEOGRAPHER
GS 0401 PLANT HEALTH SAFEGUARDING SPECIALIST, SITC OFFICER, AGRICULTURIST
GS 0404 BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE TECHNICIAN
GS 0421 PLANT PROTECTION TECHNICIAN, PLANT PROTECTION AID
GS 0414 ENTOMOLOGIST
GS 0430 BOTANIST
GS 0434 PLANT PATHOLOGIST
GS 1712 CANINE INSTRUCTOR, TRAINING SPECIALIST
WG 2805 ELECTRICIAN
WL 3414 MACHINIST LEADER
WG 3806 SHEET METAL WORKER HELPER
WG 3703 WELDER
WG 4742 UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATOR
WG 4749 MAINTENANCE MECHANIC
WG 5001 TREE CLIMBER
WG 5003 GARDENER
WG 5031 PRODUCTION WORKER
WG 5048 ANIMAL CARETAKER
WG 5409 WATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR
WG 6907 MATERIALS HANDLER

Who you should contact at NAAE and when?

When you feel something is not right, unfair, adversely affecting any bargaining unit members or when you are under investigation or face disciplinary action.

There are specific timelines both the bargaining unit and management are required to abide by. The sooner you contact us, the sooner we can advise you. YOU NEED TO:

Step 1. Collect facts. Rumors and hearsay are not helpful or admissible.

Step 2. Reach out to your Local Bargaining Unit President or Representative. Immediately seek help! You must adhere to specific timelines. Don't wait; if you wait, it may be too late.

Step 3. If you do not have a Local Bargaining Unit representative, contact a Regional V.P. listed above or any Executive Committee member you feel comfortable with. The NAAE Executive Committee (EC) meets once a week to discuss agenda items and to address EC

NAAE Executive Committee Quick Contacts

National President Mike Randall (808) 838-2705 mikeran@aloha.net

National Vice President Susan Kostecky (919) 221-6258
susan.p.kostecky@aphis.usda.gov OR spkostecky@gmail.com

National Treasurer Jim Triebwasser (612) 919-9029 triebwas2000@yahoo.com

National Secretary Trish Claves (520) 285-5404 pimahorse@hotmail.com

Eastern Regional Vice President. Julie Orr (404) 260-7838
julie.orr@aphis.usda.gov

ER VP Assistant Fernando Lugo (787) 710-7339

Western Regional Vice President Willis Gentry (956) 726-2258
willis.e.gentry@aphis.usda.gov

WR VP Assistant Kathy Ortega (310) 955-3307 kathywr63@gmail.com

At-Large VP Paul Hodges (504) 715-9537 naaeph@hotmail.com

At-large VP Assistant Terrence Noda (808) 772-0234

VP for Safety & Health Mark Segall (281) 982-9545

PLEASE NOTIFY THE SECRETARY OF ADDRESS CHANGES PROMPTLY!

Contact the EC

If you have questions or problems concerning -

- Changes in Working Conditions
- Possible Grievances
- Being put on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Representation Rights
- Disciplinary Issues
- Vol / Lateral Transfers

Visit us
www.aginspectors.org

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

NAAE National Secretary Patricia Claves

24547 South via Montana Vista
Green Valley, AZ 85622

NAAE won't rest until there is justice and respect for every bargaining unit position .

YOUR NATIONAL NAAE REPRESENTATIVES
(Your Input & Feedback Is Most Welcome) PLEASE MAIL ALL DUES
WITHHOLDING FORMS TO NAAE NAT'L PRESIDENT FOR SIGNATURE

Mike Randall, **President/**
Chief Negotiator
P.O. Box 31143
Honolulu, HI 96820-1143
C/O USDA 375 Rodgers
Blvd
Honolulu, HI 96819

Work: (808)838-2705
Fax: (808) 838-2706
Home: (808)239-4393
Email: MikeRan@aloha.net
Cell: 808-782-6556
Please call AFTER 0700 Hawaii
Standard Time!

Susan Kostecky
National Vice President
508 NC Hwy 581 South
Goldsboro, NC 27530

Work: (919) 221-6258
Fax: (919) 583-0035 U
Email: spkostecky@gmail.com
susan.p.kostecky@aphis.usda.gov
Cell: 919) 522-6273

Julie Orr
ER VP
1220 Toffie Terrace
Atlanta, GA 30354

Work: (404) 304-2644
Fax: (404) 267-7747 U
Email: juliefayeorr@gmail.com
Julie.Orr@aphis.usda.gov

Trish Claves, **Secretary**
200 North Mariposa Rd
B500
Nogales, AZ 85621

Work: (520) 285-5404
Fax: (520) 397-0138 U
Email: pimahorse@hotmail.com

Nathan Cottrell
ER Assistant VP

Work: (972) 574-2018
Fax: [\(972\) 574-2342](tel:972-574-2342)
Email: nathan.l.cottrell@aphis.usda.gov

Jim Triebwasser,
Treasurer
3663 C-R 35
Barnum, MN 55804

Work: (218) 720-5282
Fax: (218) 720-5281
Email: Triebwas2000@yahoo.com

Paul Hodges, **At-Large**
Assistant VP
200 Crofton Rd Box 5
Kenner, LA 70062

Work: (504) 461-4225
Email: naaeph@hotmail.com

Willis Gentry, **WR VP**
520 Martens Dr.
Laredo, TX 78041

Work: (956) 726-2258
Fax: (956) 726-2322 U
Email: willis.e.gentry@usda.gov

Mark Segall- **VP for Health**
& Safety
19581 Lee Road
Humble, TX 77338

Kathy Ortega, **WR**
Assistant VP
222 Kansas Ave
El Segundo, CA 90245

Work: (310) 955-3307
Email: kathyvr63@gmail.com

Kim Mann, Esq.: **Legal**
Counsel
1850 M St. N.W., Suite 280
Washington, DC 20036

If you are faxing or emailing material that must be handled with discretion, it is advisable to call recipient first. **U MEANS UNSECURED FAX MACHINE**

PLEASE NOTIFY THE NATIONAL SECRETARY OF AN ADDRESS CHANGE!

This Newsletter is distributed to NAAE members & to members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees

Trish Claves, Secretary
25457 South via Montana Vista
Green Valley, AZ 85621

POSTMASTER: ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED – PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD