

NFFE News



A Union Victory at Fort Irwin

May 2, 2018

Ever have an issue with your supervisor? The Union can help with that. NFFE Local 2035, representing U.S. Army employees at the Fort Irwin National Training Center, received multiple complaints from its bargaining unit employees regarding aggressive and violent behavior from a supervisor towards staff. Local leadership immediately sprung to action and notified management of its intent to enter the worksite in order to investigate the alleged hostile work environment. Management ordered the Union to cease and desist from its investigation claiming that the Union was unauthorized to enter the premises. Even more egregious, the Agency claimed that the Union must have a grievance filed to conduct the investigation and that the Union's use of the internal mail system to notify management and employees of the investigation was unauthorized. The Union invoked arbitration after the Agency denied its grievance.



NFFE Local 2035 offers a great example of what strength in numbers means. Having grown in both size and representational ability, since a renewed focus on organizing in 2015.

The arbitrator found that the Agency failed to comply with the law and the parties' Collective Bargaining Agreement when it denied the Union access to the worksite in question. In the words of the arbitrator, "the Union is not a visitor to be controlled by management, it is composed of the employees it represents within the facility, and it has rights granted by federal law and the CBA. These rights are not subject to management control in the manner it attempted to pursue in this case." Ultimately, the Union has a right to ensure that employees are treated fair and that the employer maintains a safe working environment. As to the remaining issues, the arbitrator found that the Agency properly used the internal email system to communicate to bargaining unit employees and that the Union does not need to have a grievance filed in order to investigate employee complaints.

This case shows why it is so important for employees to be a member of a strong union where leaders are unafraid to stand up to management and defend its members. One of the main reasons workers join a union is to gain protection against unfair and unjust treatment. Without these protections, NFFE Local 2035 would not have been able to conduct its investigation to shed light on inappropriate behavior by a supervisor.

www.NFFE.org