



THE FEDERAL

FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL
FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS, AFL-CIO

SUMMER 2004

EMPLOYEE

IAMAW Legislative Conference Comes to Washington

On the week of May 10th, The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) held their annual legislative conference in Washington, DC. In addition to almost a thousand IAM members in attendance, there were approximately 70 members

of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE, FD 1, IAMAW) present. The week consisted of mornings packed with invigorating speeches by lawmakers and union leaders, and afternoon trips to Capitol Hill where IAM members would lobby their elected officials. *(continued on next page)*



IAM International President Thomas Buffenbarger delivers his keynote address before several hundred IAM members during lobby week.

“At the end of the day it’s all about jobs. It’s all about fairness. It’s all about who participates in getting a fair share of the economic pie in America.”

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This year’s legislative conference focused on both issues that affect the private sector and others that affect the federal sector, but the general message was that working men and women everywhere are struggling to keep their jobs, wages and benefits. Some specific issues addressed were: threatening trade policies, overtime take-aways, and encroachment on the rights of federal workers.

In the keynote address, International President of the IAMAW, R. Thomas Buffenbarger said, “It’s time to start talking about freedom in America. It’s time to start talking about freedom of workers in America: freedom for our families, freedom for our schools, freedom for our communities, freedom for us to do what we have to to make a job worthwhile again in America.”

“At the end of the day it’s all about jobs. It’s all about fairness. It’s all about who participates in getting a fair share of the economic pie in America,” said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

Congressman George Miller (D-CA) echoed a similar message: “This is about the survivability of the middle class of this country. We know what’s happening because of the tax cuts, we know what’s happening because of the dramatic increases in high income salaries in this country. We also know what’s happening to the middle class: we’re working harder, we’re struggling longer and we’re doing it for less; for less vacation, for less compensation, for less overtime, for less health care. So we’ve got to fight back!”

Convention attendees heard the speakers’ rally and left the convention energized and ready to take on the enormous task of turning our country in a new direction.

“I think our members who attended the IAMAW Legislative Conference found it a worthwhile and rewarding experience,” said NFFE President/DBR Richard N. Brown. “Hopefully they are energized and encouraged, and ready to get out there and do whatever is necessary to make sure this administration is voted out of the White House in November.”



House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi emphasizes the importance of union voter turn-out this November to IAM members.



Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) outlines the Bush administration’s attack on federal employee rights at IAM legislative conference.

The Federal Employee

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FROM THE DESK

OF THE PRESIDENT



Richard N. Brown

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Your union is engaged in an all-out battle with the U.S. Department of Defense, and although this may seem harsh, it is true nonetheless. By now, you have probably heard about the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), DoD's plan to radically change the personnel system governing the 750,000 hard-working employees within the department. The administration makes the claim that the system will increase flexibility, but make no mistake about it, this is an underhanded attempt to strip federal employees of their rights and eliminate their unions, and nothing more.

According to Secretary Rumsfeld and other members of the Bush administration our Brothers and Sisters at DoD installations throughout the country are a "national security threat" simply because they have the right to collectively bargain. This is the biggest insult to the American Civil Service that this country has ever seen.

Day-in and day-out, DoD employees work tirelessly to ensure that our troops have the support necessary to be the finest military force ever assembled, and our union takes great pride in supporting the workers who support our military. A union gives DoD employees the peace-of-mind of knowing that they will be treated fairly in the workplace. However, the guarantee of fair treatment will certainly be lost if DoD succeeds in eliminating employee unions, and DoD employees will suffer as a result.

Our local union officers around the country have worked diligently over the years to make DoD a better place to work. They have negotiated good contracts that protect workers, but also insure that tax-payer dollars do not go to waste. Now, after 50-plus years, the Bush admin-

istration is hell-bent on destroying the progress that has been made.

You may have seen news articles telling you that the DoD has been reaching out to unions in order to work collaboratively to formulate the new personnel policy. Don't believe it. They see this

collaboration as a mere formality.

Most recently, a coalition of unions has met with Secretary of the Navy Gordon England to discuss the NSPS. Secretary England has been tasked by Secretary Rumsfeld to see that his plan is implemented. The next meeting is scheduled for June 29th. NFFE and the other unions have put forth some tough questions that we expect to be answered. As of this writing, I am not very optimistic about this upcoming meeting, but we will certainly keep the membership informed.

Brothers and Sisters, each and every one of us must continue to keep this issue at the forefront of our legislative efforts. We must continue to educate our legislators on the ill effects of the proposed NSPS plan. As we have said before, once employees at DoD are stripped of their rights, it is only a matter of time before the

model is applied to all federal agencies. This issue is a battle for the entire civil service, not just those under DoD.

Fraternally,



"According to Secretary Rumsfeld and other members of the Bush administration our Brothers and Sisters at DoD installations throughout the country are a "national security threat" simply because they have the right to collectively bargain."

FROM THE DESK

OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

As we reach the midway point of the year, NFFE's financial picture continues to improve. We have been able to collect more than \$40,000 in back per capita tax owed to the District by its member Lodges. A major asset in the collection of the arrearage was the Forest Service Council bringing all their member Lodges current in their dues. With assistance from IAM we have been able to secure funds from a long time disbanded Lodge. The amount was more

here at the District permits us to maintain a more accurate membership count. The cash lodges that remain need to send us a copy of their remittance report when they send in their payment of the per capita tax. This ensures the members of those Lodges remain current.



John M. Paolino

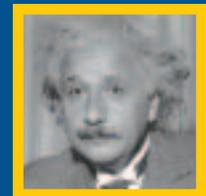
"Membership provides the resources to enable NFFE FD1 to function and represent Federal employees. Make membership a priority at your Lodge."

than \$36,000 sitting in cashier's checks for more than 2 years. This amount plus some additional funds was used to repay IAM for the laptop computers they purchased for the NFFE BRs at the time of the affiliation.

Some of our long standing cash Lodges have switched to direct dues. The change from cash to direct is significant as it aids in our financial planning. The receipt of the remittance report

We are continuing our net growth in membership, despite the loss of members through attrition, contracting and reorganizations. This growth can be attributed to the efforts of our Local Leaders who have made membership a priority. Membership provides the resources to enable NFFE FD1 to function and represent federal employees. Make membership a priority at your Lodge.

"I consider it important, indeed urgently necessary, for intellectual workers to get together, both to protect their own economic status and, also, generally speaking, to secure their influence in the political field." —Albert Einstein



Although written more than half a century ago, this quote from Albert Einstein, member of the American Federation of Teachers, Local 522 at Princeton University, demonstrates that while conditions have improved greatly for workers in this country, unions are every bit as relevant today as in 1938

when he chose to become a union member. Einstein's words are a reminder that unions played a significant role in our nation's past, and can be just as influential as we look toward the future.

**Quote Provided by Historian Abraham Orlofsky*

FROM THE DESK

OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Relentless litigation over the last several months yielded notable gains for NFFE members this quarter. On May 28, 2004, the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled in NFFE's favor finding that the Federal Labor Relations Authority thwarted Congress' intent to promote collective bargaining when it failed to find that management at Letterkenny Depot committed an unfair labor practice when the agency refused to bargain over the closure of child care facilities. After four years of bargaining, three years of administrative procedures, and argument before the second highest court in the country, Local 1442 was vindicated in its persistent efforts to protect the rights and privileges accorded to the union and to bargaining unit membership.

On April 19, 2004, our efforts to obtain standing before the General Accounting Office (GAO) to protest an agency decision under A-76 to contract out in-house functions resulted in an

Brothers and Sisters. NFFE is answering the call to arms by fighting against any change that will strip any civil service rights held

sacred to federal employees and their legal representatives. Following our uncompromising dialogue during the public comment period for proposed regulations on the new personnel system for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), NFFE secured one of four union seats "to meet and confer" period with DHS and Office of Personnel Management statutorily mandated by the Homeland Security Act of 2002. NFFE is also an active part of a coalition of lawyers from every DoD union in an effort to develop an offensive as well as defensive legal strategy to preclude implementation of the infamous NSPS as currently contemplated by DoD officials.



Susan Grundmann

"With the sweeping 'transformations', we see an emerging wave of union animus gripping the Federal agencies."

unprecedented letter from U.S. Comptroller General David M. Walker to Chairpersons and Ranking Minority Members of key congressional committees. This letter requested legislative amendment of the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984 to allow standing for federal employees to file bid protests with the GAO. Reports from Capital Hill indicate that such legislation is rapidly gaining widespread support with Congressional leaders.

The Bush Administration has heralded an unparalleled 'transformation' of several personnel systems under which we have numerous loyal

With the sweeping 'transformations', we see an emerging wave of union animus gripping the federal agencies. This fall, NFFE will again return to the U.S. Court of Appeals to stem the anti-union sentiment emanating from the FLRA and its recent denial of our negotiability appeal, which was dismissed without any logical basis in law or precedent. And on an individual basis, we have been repeatedly called to challenge disciplinary action initiated by federal employers in response to righteous union activism. Only through the enforcement of our legal rights will we assure that those rights continue unabridged.

October Convention Nearing

As the 2004 National Convention for NFFE nears, locals around the country have begun to make preparations to attend. The event, to be held Monday, October 11th through Thursday, October 14th at Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas, NV, promises to be a landmark in NFFE's history, as elections for national officers will take place, changes will be made to NFFE bylaws, and other resolutions will be decided on.

If your local is planning on sending delegates to the convention, it is important that your local nominate those delegates immediately, if you have not done so already. All election credentials must be in hand at NFFE National Headquarters by September 24, 2004 for delegates to be eligible. It should also be noted that all locals must be current through July 31, 2004 to be eligible to participate in the convention. Any local in arrearages will be ineligible.

For all NFFE members attending the convention, it is very important that everyone stay at the Bally's Las Vegas property. Rooms are available to NFFE members at a rate of \$119 per night. NFFE is obligated to pay for the block of rooms reserved, so staying at another hotel could cause financial hardship and is not recommended.

Excitement for this year's convention is certainly mounting. In addition to official business that will be conducted,

2004 NFFE NATIONAL CONVENTION

October 11th–14th (Mon.–Thurs.)

Bally's Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.

For Reservations Call: 1(800) 634-3434

(Be sure to say you will be attending the National Federation of Federal Employees' convention when making reservations.)

there will also be a number of social events for participants. Overall, the event will be a great opportunity for NFFE members from across the country to come together, share their experiences, and build the camaraderie that helps keep this union strong.

We look forward to seeing you there.



The entrance to Bally's Las Vegas as seen from the corner of Flamingo Road and Las Vegas Boulevard at night.

LABOR MANAGEMENT

NFFE and Other Unions Continue to Wage War Against DoD Labor Relations Plan

The fight of NFFE and other federal employee unions against the Department of Defense's (DoD) initial proposal for a new labor relations plan has met with some success in recent months.

Members of Congress joined in criticizing DoD's process for designing its new human resources system. Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) argued at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel that DoD was ignoring the will of Congress by disregarding labor unions and the Office of Personnel Management in its design process. Rather than involving these other groups, Defense "presented a singular approach right out of the box," an approach that was "needlessly confrontational" and that indicated the department "views consultation as a formality," said Levin.

Bowing to pressure from both Congress and the labor community, DoD decided in April to scrap its original plan and begin the process anew. Secretary of the Navy,



Carl Levin, Ranking Member on the Senate Government Affairs Committee, criticized the DoD's original process for overhauling labor relations as "needlessly confrontational."

pledge "to take the time necessary to do the job right."

The DoD's revised strategy for implementing a new NSPS includes working with the Office of Personnel Management on new labor-relations and pay-for-performance systems, working with the Merit Systems Protection Board to create a new disciplinary appeals process, and consulting with unions at each stage of the process. The personnel system is planned to be implemented with two pilots beginning in July 2005, and each pilot will be followed with an evaluation. DoD hopes to bring the number of employees under the new system to 300,000 by 2007, then expand the system to encompass the entire Defense workforce with OPM approval.

On June 7th, 41 unions representing defense employees sat down with DoD and OPM officials to begin discussions. While DoD hoped to break the group down into teams to facilitate discussion, the unions held firm that until there is a

... "presented a singular approach right out of the box," an approach that was "needlessly confrontational" and that indicated the department "views consultation as a formality."

Gordon England, was chosen to head the new effort at developing the reformed personnel system. In an open letter to DoD's civilian employees Secretary England and David Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, state: "As we develop a process for designing and implementing the National Security and Personnel System, we want to ensure that all stakeholders in the new system – including civilian employees, managers, and exclusive representatives – have an opportunity to provide their thoughts, ideas, views and concerns." They also

mutual understanding of the problems the new system aims to correct, the group will continue to meet in general session. The next meeting is scheduled for June 29th.

"I am proud of the fight this organization put forward thus far in protesting DoD's bogus labor relations plan," said NFFE President/DBR Richard N. Brown. "But we must also remember that the fight is far from over. This issue is vitally important and we cannot allow it to fall by the wayside. The futures of all federal employees depend on the outcome of this battle."

NFFE-IAM Members Storm Capitol

The 2004 IAMAW Legislative Conference, once again, was a huge success for NFFE, Federal District 1. With approximately 70 members spending the week in Washington, NFFE members made certain their message was heard loud and clear on Capitol Hill.

NFFE members made significant strides to gain advocates of federal employee issues in Congress. These Congressional advocates will be crucial to the implementation of legislation needed to preserve the integrity of the federal government under the current administration. Over the course

"I am proud of what NFFE accomplished during lobby week."

Every NFFE member attending lobby week scheduled multiple appointments with members of Congress, demonstrating to our elected leaders the importance of issues currently affecting federal employees. NFFE members, although addressing many different issues over the course of the week, predominantly focused on competitive sourcing and the Department of Defense's National Security Personnel System.

of the week, a number of Congressional representatives agreed to take the lead on key federal employee issues by introducing new legislation.

Two such representatives are Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Carl Levin (D-MI), both of whom had a representative from their staff meet with NFFE-IAM members during lobby week. Since then, the two Senators have co-authored an amendment that that would allow federal



NFFE members gather for a reception during lobby week.

Hill during 2004 Lobby Week

employees to protest A-76 job competition decisions. The amendment was passed and inserted into the 2005 Defense authorization bill.

“Providing federal employees with the ability to protest job competition decisions much as the private sector can isn’t about litigation rights; it’s about fairness,” said Collins.

By making the most of lobby week, NFFE has effectively opened avenues for the union’s membership to address legislative issues. However, the true value of lobby week is to forge relationships with legislators that are maintained year-round.

“I am proud of what NFFE accomplished during lobby week,” said NFFE President Richard N. Brown. “The challenge will be for everyone who attended lobby week to make the most of their experience by continuing to cultivate relationships with their representatives and to maintain a

continuous dialogue with their offices regarding federal employee issues.”



Bud Taylor (left) of NFFE Local 1164 meets with Congressman John Larson (right), (D-CT), in his Capitol Hill office during lobby week.



Business Representative John Griffin (left), NFFE National President/DBR Richard N. Brown (center-left), Red River Army Depot Chief of Staff Jimmy Schull (center-right), and NFFE Local 2189 President Jimmy Reed (right) pose with the national guard unit at Red River, stationed there to secure the facility. Griffin and Brown were at the facility to educate the members of Local 2189 on the National Security Personnel System and to partake in an organizing drive.



AROUND THE COUNTRY

Sister Bernie Robertson Partakes in Historic AFL-CIO Bus Tour

A large group of people stands in the town square of Youngstown, Pennsylvania. 51 people hold pictures of homes, each having been foreclosed on in the area in recent years, and each picture representing hundreds more just like it. Speakers share stories of the immense job loss that has plagued Youngstown, and although the sky above is clear and blue, evidence of widespread hardship is all around. Buildings are boarded up and crumbling because the city does not have the funds for proper upkeep. Even the American flag flying over the square is tattered and worn, evidence of funding shortages and tough spending decisions, but also symbolic of the tattered and weary American dream.

From March 24-31, these 51 people, one from each state in the U.S. and the District of Columbia, traveled across the country in buses. The goal of this historic Show Us the Jobs

6,000 residents, most are employed by the federal government and many are losing their jobs to privatization. Bernie sees heavy stress and cases of severe depression among her friends and neighbors; her own job is at risk as well

“I love Wyoming and my job with the USDA, but I feel betrayed seeing my fellow citizens and possibly myself victimized by privatization. Workers are not given any consideration in this process and that is a true injustice. We need a president who will protect workers, not treat them as expendable resources,” Robertson said.

Protecting workers has clearly not been a priority for President Bush since taking office in 2001. Since January of 2001, the U.S. has lost a net 2.9 million private-sector jobs, including 2.8 million good manufacturing jobs. The jobs that have been created recently are not sufficient to employ the new individuals entering the job market, let alone to significantly lower the unemployment rate. Two thirds of

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bus tour, sponsored by the AFL-CIO and Working America, was to share 51 individual stories and highlight how the current job crisis occurring in our nation is affecting individuals, families and communities. The busses made stops in 18 cities in eight key Presidential battleground states—Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania—and eventually culminated in Washington, D.C. One woman who participated in the tour and shared her story was Bernie Robertson, President of NFFE Local 2191.

Bernie is a visitor information specialist for the USDA Forest Service in Worland, Wyoming. In addition to serving as president of her local, she is the regional vice president for the Forest Service Council of NFFE, Federal District 1. Through her participation in NFFE, Bernie works directly with federal employees whose jobs have been outsourced as a result of privatization. In her town of approximately



Bernie Robertson of NFFE Local 2191 demonstrates at an AFL-CIO Show Us the Jobs bus tour rally.

our states currently have fewer jobs than at the beginning of 2001. Additionally, the Bush administration will be the first in more than 70 years to finish its term with more people out of work than when it started.

“The current job crisis is not an isolated problem,” Robertson said. “Teachers, RN’s, IT professionals, lawyers, professors..., everyone is being impacted. And the ripple effect is reaching everyone. Once people lose their jobs, they don’t have the money to buy groceries, or clothing, or go the doctor or optometrist, or do any banking. The problem just keeps going. The same people who used to volunteer at food pantries are now turning to them for help.”

“I am angry,” said Robertson. “I am furious. But I am also determined to do everything I can to make a change, to help myself and to help others. We cannot be apathetic. We have to get out in November and vote for leaders who will make a difference in this country, to hold their feet to the fire and make them keep their promises. We can make a change. It happens with one person. Things look bleak right now, but after the rainstorms there is always a rainbow. We just have to push that rainbow forward.”

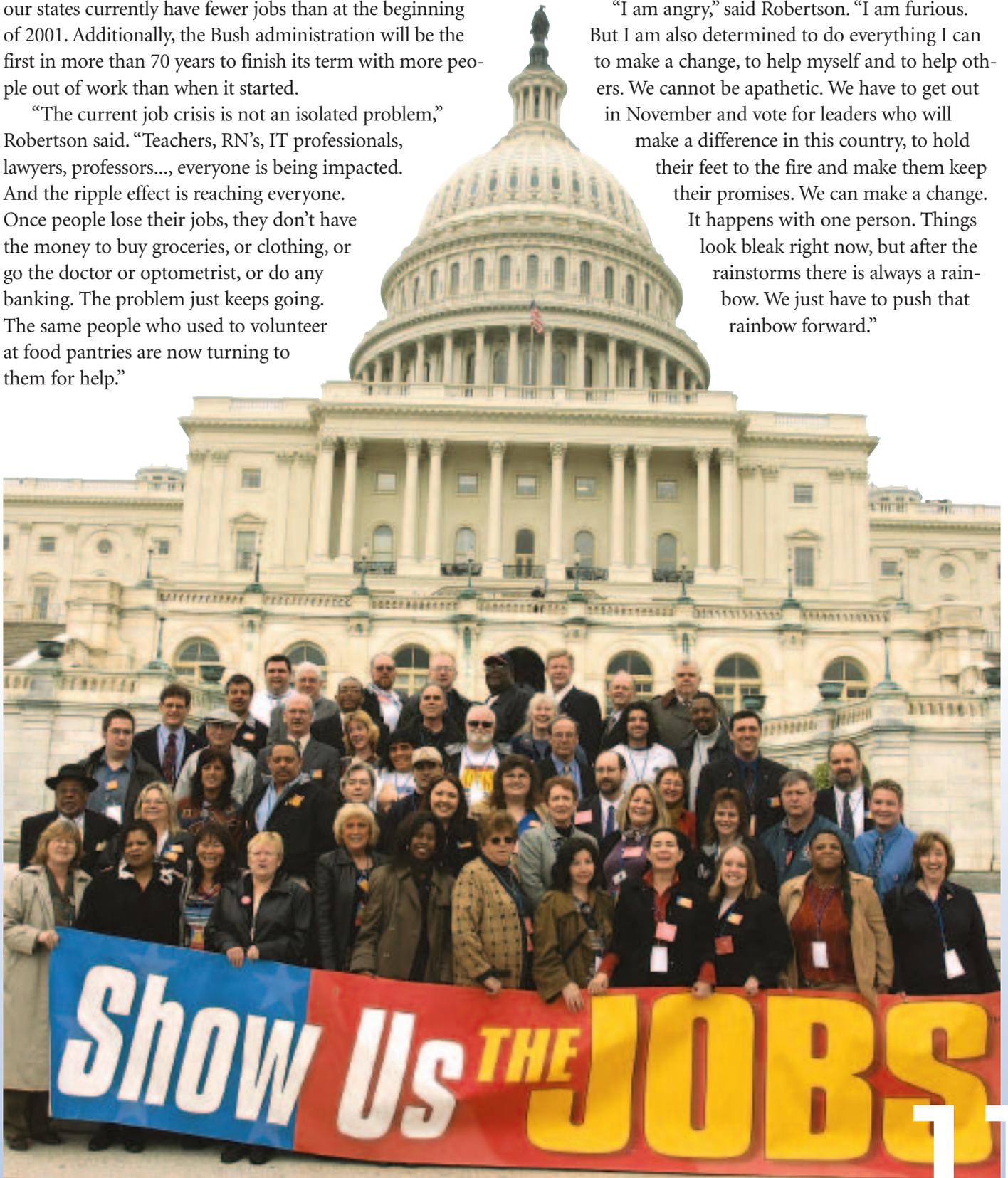


PHOTO BY RALPH ALSWANG

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Local 60 Demonstrates the Value of a Union by Getting Politically Active

Compared to some NFFE locals, Local 60 is fairly modest in size with just 47 members. Centered in Missoula, Montana, the local also has the challenge of being spread over four different offices in a large geographical area. Yet in spite of these obstacles Local 60, under the leadership of President Liz Gupton, is making its voice heard.

Local 60's most notable work has been with the issue of competitive sourcing. "We jumped on the competitive sourcing bandwagon right from the beginning," said Local 60 President Liz Gupton. The Forest Service offered up 80% of its positions to be studied for potential outsourcing, compared with agencies such as the Bureau of Land management which proposed as few as 25%. This lack of loyalty the Forest Service demonstrated toward its employees inspired Local 60 to take action.



Liz Gupton, President of NFFE Local 60 and Local Vice President Bill Kilroy at a workshop on collaboration and forest restoration.

One way Local 60 has taken action is through work with the Montana Community Labor Alliance, a coalition of labor and community groups that work together to promote workers' rights. Members of Local 60 attend MCLA meetings, stirring up members and enlisting their help in the fight against the erosion of union rights. Through the MCLA Local 60 members volunteer for campaigns of local candidates who support labor interests, participating in activities such as literature drops. They write letters to their representatives in government, encouraging them to protest competitive sourcing. They also take a very proactive role with local press coverage, writing letters to the editor and opinion pieces on various issues. "Being politically active is so extremely important," said Gupton. "We have to get back on politically stable ground."

Local 60 also benefits from a strong working relationship with management officials. Local 60 representatives sit on a number of partnership councils and regularly attend these meetings. "Management has come to recognize the value of working together," said Gupton. "We have our bumps and dips, but overall we have a really good relationship."

The hard work is paying off and the local has realized some success in its fight against competitive sourcing. Most notably, Local 60 helped unionize the Content Analysis Team (CAT), a detached unit of the Forest Service. This group of approximately 20 positions was selected by the Forest Service to be converted to the private sector. The CAT employees asked that their positions first be studied, but the Washington office declined this request; the employees decided to fight this decision by unionizing and filing a grievance. Through the help of Local 60, a petition drive was run last June and the CAT unit was certified in September, allowing those employees to retain their Forest Service positions despite protest from the agency.

Liz Gupton and Local 60 should be commended for their hard work and resulting progress in the battle against competitive sourcing.

"We jumped on the competitive sourcing bandwagon right from the beginning."