



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND LABOR RELATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20420
OCT 05 2006

William H. Wetmore
Third Executive Vice President
National Veterans Affairs Council (NVAC)
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
Board of Veterans Appeals
VA Central Office
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Wetmore:

We acknowledge receipt of your September 8, 2006 National Grievance regarding, "Official Time for training at the Multi-District Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, from June 12 to June 16, 2006." In your grievance you allege that management violated Article 4 and 45 of the AFGE/VA Master Agreement and past practice by giving "...less than the full 40 hours of official time or administrative absence for attendees of classes that were not internal union business." You also allege that some hours of official time were granted in some cases but attendees had to take annual leave or leave without pay to attend the balance of the classes.

Management denies any violation to the Master Agreement related to the above referenced conference. When we received the grievance, we immediately contacted you via electronic communication to inform you that we had no record of this particular training conference and had not received any official time inquiries about it. In fact, we asked you to provide us a copy of the agenda, copy that you faxed on September 8, 2006. The agenda we received is of a conference in College Park, Georgia named AFGE New Leaders Training.

To be able to properly address your grievance, we need more information on what facilities you believe did not provide the "full 40 hours of official time or administrative absence" and the specific classes or tracks that were considered inappropriate for official time. Once we receive the requested information, we will be able to properly address the allegations made in your grievance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Cowles", is written over a circular stamp.

Ronald E. Cowles
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Labor-Management Relations