

National Grievance

Date: June 14, 2006

To: Ronald E. Cowles, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Relations, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Re: Official Time for training at the Multi-District Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, From May 30 to June 2, 2006

From: Bill Wetmore, Third Executive Vice President, National Veterans Affairs Council, #53, (NVAC), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) 

1. This is a National Grievance filed under the provisions of Article 42, Section 11, of the Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees, signed March 21, 1997 (MCBA).
2. This is filed for violations of various articles of the MCBA, including Article 4 and Article 45 as well as past practices honored for years and other laws and regulations.
3. AFGE notes that multi-district training has been attended by many representatives of the bargaining unit throughout VA for many years with those representatives being granted either administrative time or official time for attending those classes that do not represent internal union business, such as steward's training, EEO training, OWCP training, and financial officers' training. That was the type of training being offered at this multi-district training.
4. This national grievance is filed because VA decided to give less than the full 32 hours of official time or administrative absence for attendees of classes that were not internal union business. In some cases, 12 hours of time was granted but the attendees had to take annual leave or leave without pay to attend the balance of the classes.
5. AFGE seeks the following remedies: cease and desist from denying properly identified union representatives official or administrative time to attend multi-district training when they are taking courses not involving internal union business; convert all annual leave or leave without pay for attendees of this conference who took non-internal union courses to official time; and any and all other action so as to insure that all attendees are made whole.

Notice to Invoke Arbitration

Date: August 18, 2006

To: Ronald E. Cowles, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Re: Official Time for Training at the Multi-District Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, from May 30 to June 2, 2006

From:  Bill Wetmore, Chair, Grievance and arbitration Committee, National Veterans Affairs Council, #53, (NVAC), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

1. The NVAC filed a grievance dated June 14, 2006 on the above matter.
2. Since more than 45 days have elapsed since the delivery of this grievance and the parties have exchanged views with respect a resolution but the matter is still not resolved, the NVAC hereby provides notice to invoke arbitration under Article 40, Section 1 of the Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees, signed March 21, 1997 (MCBA).



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND LABOR RELATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20420
JUL 26 2006

Bill 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, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Wetmore:

We acknowledge receipt of your June 14, 2006, National Grievance regarding official time for the Multi-District Training Seminar in Las Vegas, Nevada. In your grievance you allege that management violated Articles 4 and 45 of the AFGE/VA Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and past practice by not giving union officials 32 full hours of official time or administrative time to attend the training. Specifically, you allege that the VA has granted for many years "either administrative time or official time for attending those classes that do not represent internal union business, such as steward's training, EEO training, OWCP training, and financial officer's training."

We received notice about this training when one of the local facilities asked us for advice on the amount of official time to grant for this type of activity. When we reviewed the agenda, we deemed most of it proper for official time, except for specific issues we thought addressed internal union business or were not appropriate for official time. These topics were: New Officer Training; National Security Personnel System (NSPS); Political Action; and, most of the Financial Officers training, except for the sections discussing LM Reports and 990 Reports. Our decision was made in accordance with past practice and the relevant articles of the CBA.

We did not send general information to the field on this particular agenda and only advised those who contacted our office for information. For the above stated reasons and to be able to respond more accurately to your allegations, we need to know what specific facilities you are referring to in your grievance. Once you send us the names of the facilities, we will submit our final written decision in accordance with Article 42, section 11.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald E. Cowles", is written over the typed name.

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

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, (AFL-CIO)
Rogelio (Roy) A. Flores, National Vice President

MULTI-DISTRICT TRAINING SEMINAR AGENDA

Flamingo Las Vegas
3555 Las Vegas Boulevard South
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109
(800) 732-2111

May 29 – June 2, 2006

Sunday, May 28, 2006

Registration 2:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.
General Session (Candidate's Forum) 6:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Monday, May 29, 2006

Registration 7:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.
Convention Resolutions Workshop 6:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.
(If needed on Tuesday this meeting will occur at the same time)

Monday, May 29, 2006, -- Wednesday, May 31, 2006

Collective Bargaining 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Arbitration 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
New Officers Training 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
OWCP 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
MSPB 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Steward Training 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Breaks are at the discretion of the Instructor

Thursday, June 1, 2006 -- Friday, June 2, 2006

NSPS 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Health & Safety 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Political Action 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
A-76 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Advanced Steward 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.
IBB 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Breaks are at the discretion of the Instructor

Monday, May 29, 2006 -- Friday, June 2, 2006

Financial Officers 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

DAILY LUNCH BREAK 12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Thursday, June 1, 2006

Banquet/PAC Party 6:30 P.M. – 10:30 P.M.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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Rogelio (Roy) Flores
National Vice President
District Ten

MEMORANDUM

TO: 10TH District Local Presidents

FROM: Rogelio (Roy) A. Flores, NVP, District 10 *Roy Flores*

THRU: Arla Johnson, Administrative Assistant, District 10 *AJ*

SUBJECT: Multi-District Training Seminar, Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada
May 29- June 2, 2006

DATE: March 16, 2006

American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO) District 10 along with Districts 5, 6, 11, 12, and 14 will be hosting a **Multi-District Training Seminar from May 29 – June 2, 2006, at the Flamingo Casino Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada**, located at 3555 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89109. You can make your reservation at the hotel by calling (800) 732-2111. The room rate is **\$79.00 per night, single or double occupancy, plus applicable taxes. Additional persons will be charged a rate of \$30.00 per person, per night, with a maximum of three persons per guestroom.** Reservations should be made directly with the hotel no later than **Friday, May 5, 2006.** Individuals must identify themselves as part of the AFGE Multi-District group to receive this special group rate. Reservations received after the reservation deadline will be subject to the best available rate at the time the reservation is made, on a space available basis. **Note: In the event that any guest checks out prior to the reserved check-out date the hotel will add an early check-out fee of \$50.00 plus tax to that individual's account.**

The **registration fee is \$250.00 per person. Onsite registration and any registrations received after May 19, 2006 will be charged an increased registration fee of \$300.00 per person.** The Multi-District Banquet/PAC Party will be held on **Thursday, June 1, 2006 from 6:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.** Be sure to bring a gift from your local to donate to the PAC raffle. The gift should cost no more than **\$25.00.** If you have special dietary needs please indicate your needs on your registration form.

Attached you will find the registration forms that will need to be faxed, **not later than Friday, May 19, 2006,** to the District 10 office (210) 735-0909. Please read the course registration form carefully so that we will be able to accommodate each registrant. We are offering the following three-day classes on **Monday - Wednesday, May 29-31, 2006: Collective Bargaining, Arbitration, New Officers Training, OWCP, MSPB, and Steward Training.** On **Thursday - Friday, June 1-2, 2006,** we are offering the following two-day classes: **NSPS, Health & Safety, Political Action, A-76, Advanced Steward, and Interest Based Bargaining (IBB).** Each registrant will need to select 1 three-day class (May 29-31, 2006), and 1 two-day class (June 1-2, 2006).

If you are interested in taking the **Financial Officers Training**, be advised that this class will be **Monday – Friday, May 29, 2006 – June 2, 2006,** and **this will be the only class you can participate in for the entire week.**

If you have any questions feel free to contact Arla Johnson, Administrative Assistant at the District office. I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas!