



Expanding Definition of Inherently Governmental and Promoting Insourcing Must Be Top Priorities, Says AFGE

WASHINGTON, May 20 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Citing the loss of public control over important and sensitive functions in all federal agencies, the American Federation of Government Employees, today, detailed specific recommendations for rebalancing the federal government's civil service and contractor workforce.

"Significant amounts of work that should be reserved for federal employee performance are now performed by contractors because the current definition of inherently governmental is narrow, unclear, and unenforced," said Mark Whetstone, President of the AFGE National Citizenship and Immigration Services Council. "In striving to retain in their agencies important and sensitive functions, some managers have tried to compensate for the narrowness of the existing definition by employing weaker designations closely associated with inherently governmental, critical, core, etc. to protect from outsourcing pressures functions that may not meet the statutory definition but should still be performed in-house. However, these efforts have left the definition even more unclear. And, of course, even a robust and crystal-clear definition is meaningless if it is not enforced."

Although the definition of "inherently governmental" is important, the processes by which agencies identify contracts that include functions that are inappropriate for contractor performance and then correct those contracts through insourcing or modification are even more important. "If we are serious about ensuring in-house performance of functions that should be reserved for federal employee performance, then we must block attempts to gut the requirement that non-DoD agencies establish contractor inventories," added Whetstone.

AFGE outlined several recommendations for striking a better balance between federal employees and contractors including: expand, enforce and clarify the definition of inherently governmental; compile and review service contractor inventories, consistent with the law, and then integrate the results into the budget process; and correct, through insourcing and modification, contracts that include functions that should not be outsourced, where inappropriately outsourced, or a inefficiently performed, consistent with the law.

Whetstone went on to address serious flaws with the Screening Partnership Program (SPP) at the Transportation Security Administration, a system that converts the inherently

governmental federal screening duties performed by Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to private contractors. "The SPP is contrary to Congressional intent to federalize airport security, and violates statutory prohibitions against the outsourcing of federal jobs without allowing federal employees to compete for those jobs," said Whetstone. "The SPP includes none of the safeguards such as a cost comparison of federal employee performance to that of the contractor, risk analysis determination or any demonstration of savings. If the rules that govern outsourcing in the rest of the federal government were applied to the SPP, TSA screening jobs would be kept in-house if for no other reason than the costs of extra oversight needed for contractor employees would make contracting too expensive."

AFGE is the largest federal employee union representing 600,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.

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