

NFFE NEWS



RELEASE



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BUSH SIGNS DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION, NSPS REFORM INTO LAW

Washington, DC – Yesterday, President George W. Bush signed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (H.R. 4986) into law. Included in the bill was language to fundamentally alter the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), a controversial personnel reform at the Department of Defense (DoD).

“We are glad to see this process finally come to an end,” said NFFE President Richard N. Brown, referring to the drawn out path the bill took to reach passage. “It has been almost two months since we learned what was in the conference report. We fought very hard for changes to NSPS, and we are happy these reforms are finally signed into law.”

Section 1106 of the bill includes language modifying NSPS. The language will restore collective bargaining rights and employee appeal rights for Defense workers under NSPS. It also exempts blue collar workers from NSPS entirely. The language left in place DoD’s authority to create a pay for performance system. However, the measure would guarantee that NSPS employees get 60 percent of the annual pay raise given to most federal workers if they perform at a satisfactory level or above. Only the remaining 40 percent of the pay adjustment, which is set annually by Congress, would go toward performance pay. Defense workers will also continue to receive locality pay when performance is satisfactory.

“We believe these NSPS reforms greatly improve DoD’s personnel system,” said Brown. “It was unrealistic for the agency to think that the rank and file Defense workers would embrace a new system when their workplace rights, such as the rights to bargain and have a fair system of appeals, are taken away under that system. With these changes, NSPS has a much better chance of being a success. This reform is without a doubt a victory for Defense workers.”

While the new rules for NSPS are an improvement over the previous plan, unions are careful not to be too enthusiastic about the personnel system.

“We believe these changes greatly improve the personnel system over its previous form, but NSPS is still far from perfect in our opinion,” said Brown. “But at least some common sense has been restored.”

NFFE applauds Congress for getting this important bill passed.

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE currently represents 90,000 federal employees government-wide, including 45,000 in the Department of Defense. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.