



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

John Gage
National President

J. David Cox, Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Augusta Y. Thomas
National Vice President for
Women and Fair Practices

June 4, 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I've worked full-time for AFGE since 1977; first as a local officer, then as President of our largest local, then as Fourth District National Vice President, and for the past nine challenging but invigorating years, as your National President. I've been in the forefront of just about every fight our union has waged.

Along the way, there have been exhilarating wins and hard losses, one after another. Always they were accompanied by the reality of the next organizing drive, the next demonstration, and the next election.

Working on behalf of working people, to me, has always been the only show in town. The fundamental cause of the labor movement has always rung so pure and true to me. From the time I was growing up in a Pittsburgh steel family, going through the great steel strikes, seeing the solidarity of my Dad's friends, seeing them build a better life for their families, and then watching their despair when one day the company just chained the gates and disappeared, taking jobs and pensions with them. The union was always there for them, in good times and in terrible times. I was proud that my father was a union member.

It was an honor to sweep the floor after their union meetings. I thought they were kidding when I was told, "You go to this high school, that college, and then come work for the union." I laugh about it now, but I do feel that the hex of the steelworkers of the Heppenstall Company was the blessing of my life.

So. To the point. I'm not running again for National President. Frankly, I've never been able to put the union in the proper place; I've never been able to be the activist and simultaneously take care of those who love me. For once, I'm putting my family first.

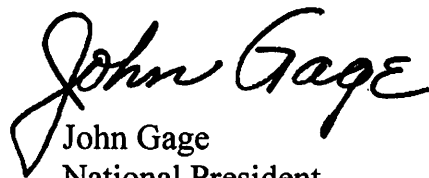
I'm sixty-six years old, and another three years seems like a very long time. I've always had tough elections. But strangely, with this one, I find myself more concerned about winning than losing.

Health-wise and intellectually, I actually feel better than ever. And I don't want to retire. I just want to – not move on, that's the wrong phrase – I want to contribute to the labor movement in other ways, whether it's organizing new members, negotiating contracts, speaking to activists, all of those essential ingredients to trade unionism that I love: I am at your service.

I'd like to think that AFGE is stronger now than it was nine years ago when I was elected National President. To me it feels like we're better now than ever. For the next ten weeks, I will continue to perform the duties that as your National President. Specifically, I intend to finish negotiating AFGE's first contract with TSA. I will continue to develop our political program for the 2012 election, and I will continue to work to ensure that AFGE's members are getting the best possible legal and representation service from their union. In doing all this, I intend to leave the office of the National President in excellent shape for my successor, to whom I pledge my wholehearted support.

Brothers and sisters, it's been a great run. If I do not have the pleasure of seeing you before August 13th, I'll see you at the convention in Las Vegas. All the best to you and your families.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Gage". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

John Gage
National President