



Local Line

July
2026

AFGE Local 3172 News
President Sylvia Norman

Vol. 115

IMPORTANT NOTICE -----NEXT LOCAL MEETING NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS FOR TERMS OF OFFICE 10/01/26 TO 9/30/29 FOR:

President; Vice President of Operations; Vice President of Health and Safety; Treasurer; Secretary/Benefits Coordinator; delegates and two alternate delegates to each of the following: AFGE Council 247, Council 220 Convention, AFGE 12th District Caucus, and AFGE National Convention.

The Local meeting will be held on Saturday, August 22, 2026, 9:00 a.m., at the Sacramento Marriott Rancho Cordova, 11211 Point East Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA, 95742, (916) 638-1100. The primary purpose of the meeting is to accept nominations as referenced above.

AFGE ELECTION RULES FOR ACCEPTANCES OF NOMINATION WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

Candidates must provide written acceptance of the nomination, which must be received by UniLect no later than 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2026, or accept the nomination at the Nomination meeting on 8/22/26 before the end of the meeting.

Acceptances can be mailed to UniLect Election Services, Attn: Nominations, v with subject line "AFGE Local 3172 Nominations". A letter of acceptance is a self-nomination.

**UniLect Nominations
PO Box 4569
Paso Robles, CA 93446**

**The email address for emailed nominations is
candidates@unilect.com**

By virtue of the office, in descending order, the President, VP Operations, and the VP Health and Safety are automatic delegates to AFGE Council 247, AFGE Council 220 National Convention, AFGE National Convention, and the AFGE 12th District Caucus.

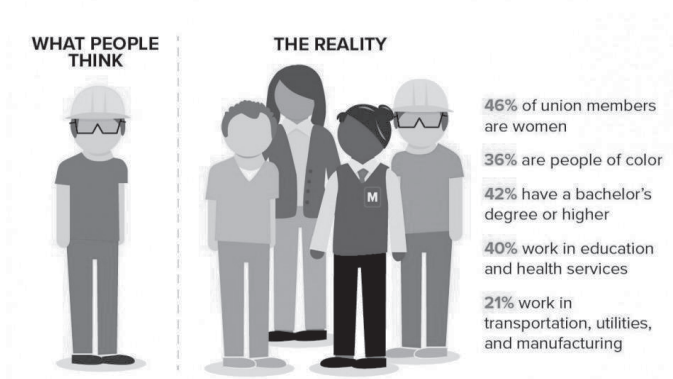
Based upon the current membership strength and current rules and regulations, this Local is entitled to the number of delegates as follows: AFGE Council 247 - 6, AFGE Council 220-5, AFGE 12th District Convention-6, AFGE National Convention

RSVP INSTRUCTIONS

You must RSVP for the local meeting by e-mail to AFGE Local 3172 President, Sylvianorm@aol.com, no later than Friday, August 14, 2026, for lodging.

The Local will provide lunch and beverage service.

Who are today's union members?



Union members refers to working people age 18-64 who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

More at go.epi.org/unions

Economic Policy Institute

Preventative Health Screening

I have received numerous emails from employees who have less than 80 hours of Sick Leave and require administrative time for Preventative Health Care Screening.

They have been denied Leave for dental Care, with annotated as not meeting the requirement for Preventative Health Screening. This is contrary to the Executive Order.

In addition, the U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services includes Oral Health/Dental exams as Preventative Screening. OPM description of Preventative is very broad, and Reg. 5 includes Dental Screening as a category.

Lack of Dental Care can sometimes lead to life-threatening infections and illnesses; therefore, we believe it is imperative to correct the error of denying Excused Absences in these instances.

The Personnel Policy Manual (PPM) S630_9, section 3.3.6. states that employees with less than 80 hours of accrued sick leave may be excused for up to four hours each leave year to participate in preventive health screenings. Although preventive dental health screening is not specifically mentioned in the PPM, bi-yearly/yearly checkups and cleanings appropriately fall within the category of preventive health screenings.

However, employees must understand that preventive health screenings do not extend to all forms of dental care. Excused absence cannot be granted for fillings, root canals, bridge work, cosmetic work, and other dental procedures extending beyond preventive screening.



Message from the President

Sylvia Norman



AFGE Local 3172 has been aggressively protecting the rights of employees and pursuing justice for employees in our authority.

- **Pending Arbitrations:** The 3-day suspension case remains pending arbitrator selection, and the disparate treatment case remains unresolved after the agency offered settlement. The case has been assigned to Patty McGowan.
- **Bargaining Obligation Risk:** The agency has responded to Council 247's request to bargain over CSR cadre assignments to TSR N8NN call support expansion duties, creating potential ULP exposure. They have stated that there is no obligation to bargain. I submitted the rebuttal and am preparing for a possible ULP.
- **Weather and Safety Leave:** Reno weather and safety leave denials remain active through Section 10 action and support for twenty-one grievances. Ryan Walsh Rep of record

SECTION 10 GRIEVANCES

The Richmond, Berkeley, and San Rafael SSA offices informed the employees who were the grievant that they were to take leave to participate in their own grievance. This was a violation of the statute because it was intended to discipline and discriminate against employees who filed a complaint by requiring them to submit a statement of facts in the grievance. The arbitration case has

been turned over and accepted by the AFGE National Office attorney.

Agency briefed AFGE on its plans to issue cash awards for FY 2026 on an earlier timetable, looking to pay ECSA awards (which the Agency will call “On The Spot” awards) ideally by the next pay period (early January) and the ROC awards (which the Agency will call “Performance Awards”) by the end of January or early February. Please see attached, which explains that Article 17 will continue to apply to the renamed ECSA and ROC awards. The Agency decided again not to issue QSIs.

The overall awards pool for AFGE bargaining unit employees is \$33.7 million, with 75 percent paid to ROCs (PAs) and 25 percent paid to ECSAs (OTSs). Award amounts will be consistent and not be set by individual managers, though we were not told what the award amounts will be.

Additionally, the Agency will begin issuing Time Off Awards based upon the allotments determined by agency staffing as of 10/1/2025. The Union has requested a briefing to explain the allotments for the year, pursuant to our Time Off Awards MOU.

Chief Information Office, Technology, Customer Data & AI, is conducting a SNAP Time Study as required per the MOU between SSA and USDA – Food and Nutrition Services, which allows the agency to be reimbursed for workloads supporting SNAP benefits. SSA has contracted with Urban Institute to conduct the study in both Combined Application Project (CAP) and non-CAP states. The study will consist of a cognitive interview conducted via MS Teams and an online survey tentatively scheduled for mid-May to mid-June 2026 and July 2026, respectively.



Time and Leave

By Ken Perry

Employees cheat themselves out of potentially thousands of dollars over the course of their careers by working for free. When an employee works irregular minutes of overtime, beyond their regular tour of duty, they should annotate the excess minutes in remarks in Quick Time. At the end of the week, if an employee has accumulated 8 minutes or more, this time is rounded up to the next 15-minute interval. (If an employee amasses 7 minutes or less, the extra time is rounded down.) Note that this time is accumulated **per week** and not per pay period.

Amazingly, employees work over their regular shifts each day, but do not annotate the extra time in Quick Time. They are giving away money or comp time. Although the amount may appear to be minuscule, a few minutes every day can really add up.

Article 10 Section 3.B. of our Contract states in part, “... When an employee, whether covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act or exempt, works irregularly overtime, such overtime will be paid in increments of 15 minutes. Daily increments of less than 15 minutes, if such occurs, will be accumulated during the workweek. At the end of the workweek, any increments of 7 minutes or fewer will be rounded down and any increments of 8 minutes or more will be rounded up to the next 15-minute interval.”

Remember that an employee has the choice (not management) whether to be paid overtime, or credit hours. An employee may also choose credit hours if they do not participate in a Compressed Work Schedule, or some other Alternative Work Schedule. This is an OPM rule.

Management is required to approve all requests in Quick Time in a timely manner, whether the request is for overtime or leave.



AFGE National President Kelley

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION (RA) PROCESS FAILURES

By Council 220

A. Outright Failure to Act on RA Requests

Management is outright failing to act on employee Reasonable Accommodation requests. We regularly see cases where employees are waiting years for an adjudicative decision on filed RA requests. Since the disbandment of OCREO, processing timelines have worsened significantly. Delegated officials (LDOs) are outright ignoring employee requests in many cases. RAs are being abandoned, forgotten, and ignored. Local DOs are demonstrating an unwillingness or inability to make interim decisions or provide informal accommodation while formal requests are pending.

B. Interactive Process Is a Box-Check, not a Good-Faith Effort

The interactive process for reasonable accommodation is not designed to achieve actual accommodation. It functions as a procedural checkbox rather than a genuine, individualized

assessment to identify effective accommodation. Employees report that the process is adversarial rather than collaborative, resulting in denials or inadequate accommodation that fail to address the functional limitations at issue.

C. “Alternative Accommodations” That Are Not Effective

Instead of providing effective accommodations, the agency consistently offers employees “alternative accommodations” that clearly would not be effective. The agency’s principal go-to alternative has been offering to split 15-minute rest periods. It is unclear how splitting a 15-minute break would constitute effective accommodation for most conditions. This practice suggests the agency is looking for the cheapest possible response rather than engaging in good faith.

D. Refusal to Purchase Assistive Equipment

The agency has proven to be extremely resistant to purchasing and providing assistive equipment to EWDs. Instead of purchasing necessary equipment, the agency has resorted to relentlessly opposing employees who request it. The time and financial resources spent on this opposition would have covered the cost of the equipment many times over. This is penny-wise and pound-foolish—and it violates the law.

E. Managers Claiming RAs “Expire”

Managers continue to tell employees that their reasonable accommodations “expire.” This is incorrect. Reasonable accommodation remains in effect as long as the underlying condition exists and the accommodation remains effective. The agency must correct this misinformation immediately.

F. RA Transfer Failures

When employees transfer between offices, there is no smooth process to transfer the RA and the associated accommodations. This includes the transfer of medical records. Employees are forced to re-initiate the entire RA process at their new duty station, causing gaps in accommodation and unnecessary hardship.

G. RA Wizard Filing Barriers

If employees need to file another RA request, they cannot use RA Wizard. Despite this, some managers are telling employees they must use RA

Wizard to file—which is untrue. Employees must be permitted to file RA requests through any acceptable method, and managers must accept and act on them regardless of format.

H. Medical Providers Raising Concerns

Treating physicians and medical providers are expressing frustration that their patients documented medical needs are not being accommodated by the agency. When medical professionals submit supporting documentation and specific recommendations, those recommendations are being ignored or overridden without medical justification, undermining both the accommodation process and the employee's health management.

I. Medical Appointment Accommodation Failures

Employees are not being offered split days when they have medical appointments. For employees with disabilities who may have more frequent medical needs, this creates additional barriers to maintaining employment and managing their health conditions.



LEAVE ADMINISTRATION AND FMLA VIOLATIONS

A. Forced Use of Sick Leave Over Annual Leave

EWDs are being told they cannot use Annual Leave and must use Sick Leave. This was never previously a problem, but the agency is now claiming employees must request sick leave. There have been situations where employees' sick leave balances were depleted while their annual leave balances were healthy—yet they were still denied the use of annual leave. Management is telling employees that

annual leave is “NOT for sick time” and forcing employees into advance sick leave requests. Note: This issue is not limited to EWDs and is affecting bargaining unit employees broadly.

B. Heightened Scrutiny of Sick Leave

EWDs are facing heightened scrutiny when requesting sick leave. Managers are requesting medical certificates for sick leave lasting less than three consecutive workdays. Employees with known disabilities have been accused of “abusing” sick leave when requesting to use it for their documented conditions. This scrutiny is discriminatory and creates a chilling effect on legitimate leave use.

C. FMLA Violations

Employees are being told they cannot file FMLA until their leave balances are exhausted. Please clarify the Agency's position on this and cite the law you are referring to. Management is also refusing to accept or act on FMLA paperwork, subjecting employees to intimidation and coercion in the process. These practices must cease immediately.

TELEWORK, RTO, AND DISABILITY EXEMPTIONS

Employees with disabilities have faced relentless and vicious opposition to requests for telework exemptions from the agency's return-to-office directive. The agency is not living up to its stated commitments that EWDs may be exempted from RTO. Documented issues include:

- Disabled employees who genuinely need telework as an accommodation have been ridiculed and mistreated for requesting it.
- EWDs whose actual work has not changed have resigned because telework was denied as accommodation.
- The work being performed today is identical to the work performed two years ago—there is no operational justification for denying teleworking to EWDs; if anything, with Digital First, the new commissioner is implementing, there should be more opportunities for EWDs to Telework as an RA.
- This failure to provide exemptions is discriminatory toward disabled employees and violates the Rehabilitation Act

MEDICAL RECORDS AND PRIVACY VIOLATIONS

The agency is failing to protect the medical privacy of employees with disabilities. These failures are systemic and unacceptable:

- Medical records for EWDs are being left laying around unsecured in offices.
- Managers are disclosing medical information by discussing it in open areas where other employees can hear.
- Medical records are being handled incorrectly, with documented cases of records being lost.
- Managers continue to badger employees about sensitive medical details for WAHBE or episodic accommodation requests, demanding details of diagnosis, treatment plans, and confidential treatment information that goes beyond what is necessary to decide the accommodation.



SCHEDULE A HIRING AND RETENTION FAILURES

The agency recruits and hires employees with disabilities under Schedule A hiring authority but then systematically fails to accommodate them under the law. This cycle creates:

- Attrition of qualified EWD employees who cannot sustain employment without adequate accommodations.
- Morale damage across the EWD workforce and among colleagues who witness these failures.
- Wasted agency resources—recruitment, onboarding, training, and institutional

knowledge lost when employees leave due to accommodation failures.

- A pattern and practice that contradicts the agency's stated commitment to EWDs.

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

A. Mental Health Care IS Health Care

Management regularly demonstrates a personal bias against mental health care and mental health needs. This is unacceptable and the agency must correct it. Mental health issues become physical health issues—this is not opinion, this is science. SSA needs to support mental health care for all employees and specifically for EWDs with mental health conditions. The stigmatization of mental health needs in the workplace is discriminatory and must end.

B. Workplace Stressors Affecting EWD Employees

Employees report that the cumulative effect of accommodation failures, constant operational changes, and performance scrutiny has severely impacted their mental health. In specific cases, employees perceive reassignment to call center duties as retaliation for raising accessibility concerns. The constant changes make it impossible to maintain stability, and the scrutiny strips any sense of accomplishment from the workday. Multiple employees are experiencing the same or similar issues.



San Francisco Rally with Linda Mason, Marquisha Zant, Douglas Mosher, Charlie and Doris Estudillo, Katrina Lopez, Sylvia Norman, and Shelly Jordan

Advance Your Future with the AFGE– Edvance College Benefit

July 20, 2026

Categories: The Insider

AFGE membership is about more than representation in the workplace. It is also about

providing members and their families with meaningful benefits that can improve their financial security, professional development and quality of life.

One important benefit that AFGE members should know about is the Union College Benefit powered by Edvance. Through AFGE's partnership with Edvance, eligible members and their families can explore discounted college and career-education opportunities designed to fit the lives of working adults.

Edvance provides access to a growing network of accredited colleges and universities offering more than two hundred educational programs. Depending on the participating school and program selected, members may receive tuition savings of up to 40 percent. Available options include certificates and degree programs at the associate, bachelor, and graduate levels, with selected educational pathways extending through the doctoral level.

Programs are offered online, allowing members and eligible family members to continue working, caring for their families and meeting other responsibilities while pursuing their educational goals. Edvance also provides personalized assistance to help prospective students identify programs, understand available tuition benefits and navigate the application and enrollment process.

Whether you are interested in earning your first degree, completing a degree you previously started, developing new skills or preparing for a future career opportunity, the program offers flexible pathways worth exploring. The benefit may also be used by eligible family members, expanding its value beyond the individual AFGE member.

Programs Relevant to Your Jobs

As the largest union representing federal and D.C. government employees, AFGE represents a remarkably diverse workforce. Our members protect the nation, care for veterans, secure our transportation systems, operate federal correctional institutions and deliver essential public services in communities across the country.

Edvance's educational opportunities can support the career interests of employees throughout these agencies. Examples include:

- Social Security Administration and other federal employees: public administration, social work, business, information technology and management.

Program availability, tuition discounts, admissions requirements and financial-aid eligibility vary by institution and course of study. Members should review the specific terms and total costs associated with any program before enrolling. Students may also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly known as FAFSA, to determine whether they qualify for additional financial assistance.

Visit edvancecollegebenefit.com/afge to explore programs, get matched, and connect with a student success coordinator. The benefit extends to family members, so spouses, children, and dependents can access the same discounts and support.



If you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything.

The saying "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything" emphasizes the importance of having principles and convictions.



AFGE Local Line
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Pacifica, CA 94044

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