



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on November 16, 2012

## TSA Employees Secure Union Contract

Airport security screeners for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) have formally ratified a union contract that will add some 45,000 members to the ranks of the [American Federation of Government Employees](#) (AFGE), a labor union representing over 650,000 employees of the federal government. Affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the AFGE is the largest union for non-postal federal employees and the largest union for District of Columbia workers who report directly to the mayor.



Passenger screeners and other associated employees [voted 17,236 to 1,774](#) in approval of a contract settled to in principle by the TSA and AFGE in August, and made a formal agreement on November 9. AFGE president David Cox said the union is proud that TSA employees finally have union protection that will enhance their professional lives while offering stability to the workforce.

The massive public-sector conglomerate coerces members to fork over between \$14 and \$16 out of each paycheck, providing the organization with up to \$16 million more in revenue per year. Portions of this influx of money will go to subsidizing Democratic election campaigns and funding a number of liberal agendas.

In 2012 alone, AFGE members [funneled](#) about \$1 million to Democrats, including lawmakers like Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia and Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan — while a meager three percent of those funds went to Republican candidates. The union doled out \$2 million on lobbying to the government largely to guarantee that federal employees get paid more to work less. The *Washington Times* reported on the contract:

Under the new TSA contract, employees will win annual leave based not on their performance, but how long they've held on to the job. They'll also be able to wear shorts when it's hot, with the tab for the new wardrobe picked up by the taxpayers. House Transportation Committee Chairman John L. Mica, Florida Republican, blasted the deal for focusing on "tie tacks and tattoos" instead of issues that actually matter. Those tie tacks can't exceed 1/2-inch in diameter and must be gold or silver in color. Tattoos must be covered by a sports sleeve or band that does not detract from the uniform. TSA must also provide office space for designated TSA union officials to work on union business at taxpayer expense.

The TSA was established in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks with a number of special personnel policies, including a management discretion provision over whether to bargain with employees. During the George W. Bush administration, the AFGE and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) began organizing locals within the airport security organization, but without bargaining rights their execution was limited to efforts such as representing workers in appeals of disciplinary issues.



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Early last year, TSA administrator John Pistole agreed to allow bargaining, although it was much more limited than those permitted for other federal workers eligible for union representation. Meanwhile, the AFGE overpowered the NTEU for the right to represent a national bargaining unit of over 40,000 employees.

The three-year contract not only revises the performance pay system, but also institutes policies for dress codes, shift scheduling, uniform allowances, and vacation time. "The completion of today's agreement between TSA and AFGE is a milestone in our relationship with our workforce and AFGE," Pistole affirmed in a statement. "Together, we will continue to secure our nation's transportation systems and keep the traveling public safe."

Over the years, American taxpayers have been forced to shell out \$57 billion to an agency that has made it unpleasant to travel. Many travelers have come to detest the agency, as groping and other grievances passengers have been subjected to have actually deterred people from traveling by plane.

Furthermore, hundreds of TSA employees have been fired for allegedly stealing from travelers. According to figures recently [released](#) by ABC News, the security organization has fired almost 400 workers for engaging in passenger theft, with 16 of the top 20 busiest airports in the country harboring such employees.

Meanwhile, the invasive organization has caught not a single terrorist, yet it continues to spend billions of dollars on what some people are calling "pornographic" or "X-rated" scanning machines. Interestingly, the European Union has refused to utilize the technology, largely due to the alleged health concerns they might cause.

In a report published earlier this year, the EU's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks found that "at the population level the possible effect cannot be ignored in the assessment of acceptability of the introduction of the security scanners using X-rays for passenger screening. Due to the substantial uncertainty regarding the potential occurrence of any health effects, risks for special groups within the population could not be evaluated meaningfully, although a higher risk related to exposure in childhood was noted."

Interestingly, the "X-rated" X-ray machines were implemented following a prominent lobbying campaign from the companies that ultimately secured the lavish security contract. "This is how Washington works," a recent *Washington Times* [editorial](#) read. "Instead of focusing on what needs to be done to improve safety, we have a jobs program designed to re-elect Democrats and enrich lobbyists."

*Photo of TSA screener at airport: AP Images*



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