

BARACK OBAMA

October 20, 2008

John Gage
National President
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO
80 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President Gage,

I am writing regarding my concerns about the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its policies affecting its workforce. America owes DHS employees a debt of gratitude for their efforts to protect this nation from disasters – be they man-made, accidental, or natural.

I support collective bargaining rights for all workers. As President, I will review decisions by the Bush Administration that have denied these rights to federal employees and seek to restore them.

I am also pleased to see the so-called “pay-for-performance” system advanced by the Bush Administration has finally been withdrawn. While I strongly believe that workers can and should be rewarded for high quality work, any such recognition program must not reward one employee at the expense of another. This is unfair and serves to reduce morale, rather than improve it.

In all of my administration’s hiring decisions, I will work to ensure that each nominee has a clear understanding of the labor-management collective bargaining process and my commitment to assuring its fairness. The same goes for my appointments to the Federal Labor Relations Authority and the Federal Services Impasses Panel.

I know that DHS employees understand how to best implement the DHS mission and I want to be sure they have the tools they need to get the job done. Our national security depends on it.

Thank you for everything you and your members do for the American people.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



OBAMA FOR AMERICA PO Box 8210 Chicago, IL 60680
WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM

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