

# 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 the important issues that your Transportation Security Officer (TSO) members have raised about the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). If I am elected President, I will work to ensure that TSOs have collective bargaining rights and a voice at work to address issues that arise locally and nationally.

Advocating for TSOs to receive collective bargaining rights and workplace protections will be a priority for my administration. It is unacceptable for TSOs to work under unfair rules and without workplace protections – this makes it more difficult for them to perform their jobs. Since 2001, TSA has had the unfettered ability to deny its workforce even the most basic labor rights and protections. Other law enforcement officers – from Border Patrol Agents to Federal Protective Officers to the U.S. Capitol Police—all have collective bargaining rights.

Collective bargaining rights ensure that federal agencies run as effectively as possible and are able to focus on protecting our national security. Collective bargaining agreements also provide an excellent structure to address issues such as a fair promotion system, the scheduling of overtime, shift rotation, health and safety improvements, parking, child care and public transportation subsidies. By addressing these day-to-day issues in a manner that is both functional and fair, I believe the unacceptably high attrition rate of TSOs will improve and more TSOs will remain on the job resulting in the career, professional, and highly trained workforce the public and Congress demanded following the terrible events of September 11th.

I also support re-examining the flawed Performance Accountability and Standards System (PASS) for TSOs to determine whether it meets minimum standards of fairness, transparency, and accountability. If it does not, we should replace it with the General Schedule (GS) wage system used by the rest of federal government, including other agencies in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

As President, I will make sure that the documented waste and mismanagement at TSA is subject to the same rules regarding contracting as other federal agencies. This year, TSA gave an enormous \$1.2 billion sole source contract for human resources services without regard to the rules that require them to allow current TSA employees to compete for that work.

Thank you, John, for everything you and your members do for America.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



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