

GOV. UNION CLAIMS VA'S DISABILITY BENEFITS EMPLOYEES

NOT PROPERLY TRAINED -- AFGE in Cleveland says,

"Employees are being placed on case production

shortly after the hiring process, and the only training

many specialists receive...only covers the basics..."

Story below:

Your comments accepted at bottom of page.

Share story/email link.

by Larry Scott

The headline of this story will come as no surprise to any veteran who has (or has had) a claim pending at the Veterans' Benefits Administration:

**GOV. UNION CLAIMS VA'S DISABILITY BENEFITS EMPLOYEES NOT PROPERLY TRAINED --
AFGE in Cleveland says, "Employees are being placed on case production shortly after the
hiring process, and the only training many specialists receive...only covers the basics..."**

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the union that represents many VA workers, is now telling it like it is. See press release below.

However, there is another side to this story.

Through all of the VA shredder and document mishandling debacle, AFGE has been silent. Until now. Because next week, on March 3, 2009, two Subcommittees of the House Vets' Committee will hold a joint hearing on document mishandling and AFGE will be there to tell their side of the story.

Complete info on shredding and document mishandling is here...

<http://www.vawatchdog.org/VAshredderscandal.htm>

And, info on the hearing is here...

<http://www.vawatchdog.org/09/nf09/nffeb09/nf021909-3.htm>

So, this press release is really a "pre-emptive strike" aimed at the VA and it is a hint of what AFGE will be saying at the hearing.

I'm beginning to get the feeling that the hearing will be more than a little interesting.

The following press release came to me via email...

Press release below:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 23, 2009

UNION SEEKS BETTER TRAINING FOR VETERAN BENEFITS WORKERS

CLEVELAND- The union which represents employees who process claims for Cleveland area veterans wants more extensive training. The American Federation of Government Employees Local 2823 says that it's concerned veterans will be shortchanged and thinks the agency needs to extend training by at least six months over time.

"Veteran benefits employees act as magistrates for compensation claims and need to expand their knowledge about veteran service-related disabilities," said Nick Bartzis, AFGE 2823 Local Vice-President. Without the extensive training, veteran benefits employees will not be able to fully assist with veteran needs and will not be able to deliver sufficient support for what the veterans deserve.

The employees are being placed on case production shortly after the hiring process, and the only training many specialists receive is a short training course that only covers the basics about pension and compensation claims. Bartzis says VBA specialists facilitate hundreds of disability benefits of veterans returning from Iraq, as well as Vietnam Era and World War II/Korean War veterans.

The union is looking to extend training requirements and wants to provide them with enough knowledge to adequately support the veterans. "We want to give the vets everything they deserve for fighting for our country, and that's why we're asking for more training" said Bartzis.

###

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 600,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.

posted by *Larry Scott*
Founder and Editor
VA Watchdog dot Org
