

AFGE National VA Council Reaches Tentative Agreement on **Largest Union Contract at the VA**



The AFGE National VA Council (NVAC) has reached a tentative agreement on a new contract that will preserve and expand critical protections for VA workers and the veterans we proudly serve.

Together, with the help of thousands of members, the AFGE National VA Council withstood a barrage of attacks to weaken worker protections and privatize the VA.

In addition to renewing nearly all of our 2011 Master Agreement, this tentative agreement includes revisions to Article 23 that aim to help modernize and improve the VA's hiring procedures for the benefit of veterans and VA workers alike. We hope these improvements will help address the chronic staffing shortages that NVAC members have been sounding the alarm on for decades.

Despite years of tough negotiations and attacks from the VA, we never backed down. We never stopped fighting. **In the end, NVAC accomplished what we set out to do:**



PROTECTED
workplace health
and safety rules



SAFEGUARDED
rights to negotiate
over new policies



DEFENDED
attacks to strip
investigation rights



PRESERVED
union official time



MAINTAINED
telework rights



MODERNIZED
the hiring process
to reflect changes
in the modern
day VA workforce



ENSURED
pathways
for upward
mobility and
career advancement



GUARANTEED
the opportunity
to improve
performance prior
to disciplinary action

**NVAC is encouraging all union members to
VOTE YES on the tentative agreement!**

NVAC Never Stops Fighting for Members

Reality hinders Biden's plan to make government a 'model employer'

The Washington Post



VA Isn't Bargaining in Good Faith Over Worker Issues, Union Says

Bloomberg Law

Staffing Shortages Are Growing Worse at VA After Years of Improvement

Government Executive

VA workers union 'hammering away' at negotiations for first new contract in 10 years

FEDERALTIMES

Saving the Veterans Administration means adequately staffing it

THE HILL

VHA still experiencing 'severe' staffing shortages in critical fields: watchdog

MilitaryTimes

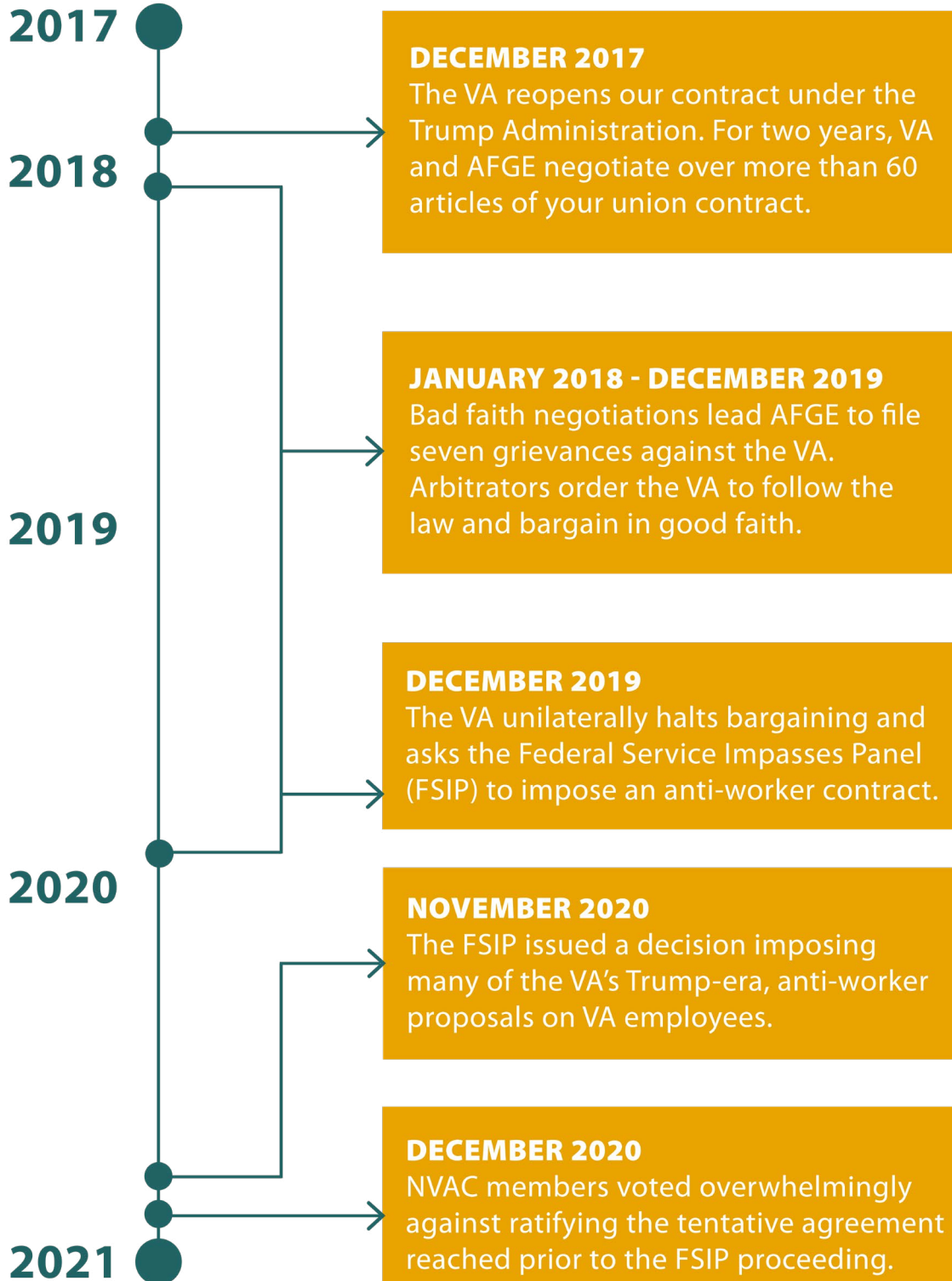
VA workers union calls for staffing shortages fix and less private health care spending

STARS AND STRIPES

The Veterans Affairs employee union helps torpedo a plan to even think about rearranging VA facilities

 FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK

2016-2020





2021-Present

2021

JANUARY 2021

President Biden is sworn into office and resets the federal government's policy on labor relations and collective bargaining.

JULY 2021

A global settlement is executed between AFGE and the VA that erases past bargaining and resets negotiations with a limited reopener of 12 contract articles.

2022

MARCH 2022

Negotiations begin in Phoenix, AZ.

MAY 2022

NVAC files its first grievance against the VA for bad faith bargaining.

JULY 2022

NVAC files its second grievance against the VA.

OCTOBER 2022

Arbitrator presides over hearing to resolve bargaining disputes.

2023

MARCH 2023

Arbitrator issues ruling that the VA violated the July 2021 Settlement Agreement and Ground Rules and engaged in bad-faith negotiations.

APRIL 2023

NVAC and the VA reached a tentative agreement rolling over our 2011 Master Agreement with updates to Article 23 - Title 5 Merit Promotion.

Changes to Article 23



For decades, our union has sounded the alarm over the VA's chronic staffing shortages, and NVAC members across the country have spoken up about the impact these shortages have on our veterans and employees. NVAC members know better than anyone how insufficient staffing leads to burnout, high turnover, morale issues, access/backlog problems for veterans, unsafe working conditions, and more.

But now, thanks to the NVAC Negotiating Team and the efforts of thousands of AFGE members across the country, we've secured an improvement to Article 23 to better combat staffing and hiring issues at the VA. Article 23 covers hiring procedures for Title 5 employees at the VA.

This includes cemetery workers, engineers, customer service workers, claim representatives, contracting specialists, administrative staff, and more. **The proposed revisions to Article 23 in this tentative agreement will help modernize and improve the VA's hiring procedures, including:**

- Revising the minimum posting period for Title 5 jobs announcements to **8 calendar days**
- Improving **procedures for how employees are ranked and selected** for virtual and remote opportunities
- Providing language that makes it clear **employees in "career ladder" positions are eligible for promotion**
- Adding a requirement that employees' **supervisors must provide a written reason for non-promotion** as a result of lack of funds or work with the **promise of promotion reconsideration** once there are changes to budget and workload
- Formally **posting job openings for "details" lasting 120 days or more** and filling them with competitive procedures



What's Next?



Now that both chief negotiators have signed the tentative agreement, it's time for AFGE members to review and ratify the tentative agreement.

- **Locals have until May 31, 2023 to review and ratify the tentative agreement. The only article up for ratification is Article 23.** Local Presidents will be hosting events to ensure that all members have a chance to read through and understand the terms of the tentative agreement.
- Local Presidents will have an opportunity to discuss the tentative agreement with NVAC leaders and to ask questions about your union contract. **NVAC will also reach out to all members via email** with additional instruction on how to vote for the tentative agreement.
- At the end of this period, NVAC notifies the VA of the result of our ratification vote.



NVAC is encouraging all union members to **VOTE YES** on the tentative agreement!