

Remarks of Don Bongo
Hawaii Federal Employees Metal Trades Council
Vice President
AFL-CIO
&
Sergeant First Class, E-7
Hawaii National Guard
227th Engineer Company (combat), 29th Brigade

Prepared For:

**The Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia**

***Hearing: Preparing for Transition: Implementation of
the National Security Personnel System***

Wednesday, April 12, 2006 - 1:30 p.m.

Asian-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Fort DeRussy, Honolulu, HI

Testimony of Don Bongo
Vice President, Hawaii Federal Employees Metal Trades Council, AFL-CIO, CLC

I would like to thank Chairman Voinovich and the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia for holding today's hearing. I know I speak for all the Federal workers here in Hawaii when I extend to you a warm Hawaiian welcome!

I want to also extend my very heartfelt note of appreciation and welcome to my Senator, Senator Daniel Akaka. Senator Akaka's outstanding efforts in Congress, to bring fairness and equity to the NSPS, is not only important to the workers here at the shipyard, but to all DoD workers worldwide. Senator Akaka, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here today.

I would like to join my good friend and colleague Ben Toyama, in reiterating that my statements here are not only on behalf of my union, the Hawaii Federal employees Metal Trades Council, but also on behalf of the United DoD Workers Coalition (UDWC), of which the Metal Trades Department is a member. The UDWC, as the committee is well aware, is a coalition of 36 DoD unions working hand in hand together on this NSPS issue. I did attend most of the UDWC meet and confer meetings as a representative of the Union until my deployment with the Hawaii National Guard to Iraq.

I am a returning combat veteran, returning from Iraq on Jan. 19, 2006. I have spent the past 6 months in LSA, Anaconda, Iraq. I have served the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & IMF, the 29th BDE, Hawaii National Guard and the military with pride and honor, and I continue to do so.

The NSPS as we know it today is nothing more than an unworkable and illegal personnel system that was created unilaterally by the Pentagon and OPM. The NSPS is not about national security but about destroying the collective bargaining rights of the employee Unions and to diminish the rights of the military veterans in the Federal service. It is too bad and so sad that the DoD uses a system called National Security Personnel System to attack the rights of veterans, the very veterans who volunteered to lay their lives on the line for our National Security.

The NSPS alleges to improve the ability to hire, promote and retain federal employees. This will be accomplished at the expense of the military veterans as the veteran preferences and rights will be diminished with the implementation of subjective rules that will not take into account the rights of veterans. The NSPS will change the Reduction In Force rules so a veteran will no longer have the right to “bump” into a job that the veteran is qualified for, that is being held by a non-veteran. Another change in the RIF rules will not allow a veteran to retreat to a previously held position if the veteran’s current position is abolished. The government will testify that they have not changed the rules regarding veterans, but they have changed all of the other rules under NSPS so that the veterans really have lost most of their protection they enjoyed under the current laws. For instance, the government has changed the rule on the definition of a competitive area in a RIF that will render moot all of the veteran rights in a RIF. The government’s reason was that they did not want to “inconvenience” the employees during a RIF. I believe that our veterans must be treated better than an “inconvenience” to the government.

The Pay for Performance system that the government intends to implement is also problematic to the employees and more so, to the disabled veterans. The managers that will be required to rate the performance of the employees do not, and will not have the appropriate training to deal with the problems of a disabled veteran, much less, the rest of the federal employees. The current managers that have problems with the current performance appraisal systems will be required to implement a much more complex system without the understanding or ability to meet the objectives of the NSPS.

NSPS won't work until the NSPS gains support from the employees and the managers that are required to implement the system. That support won't come until there is integrity and trust in the true intentions of the government. The very name of the personnel system, Nations Security Personnel System is obscene and is taking advantage of the service and sacrifices of the military members that serves to provide for our National Security. The very name of the personnel system, NSPS invokes to me a failed and corrupt system of evil intent and deceit to sell a bad system to the American public.

Thank you again for the invitation to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.