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# The Satisfaction of Federal Government Workers, Union and Non-union, with the Effectiveness of their Representation on Job Security Issues

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THE SATISFACTION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
WORKERS, UNION AND NON-UNION, WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR  
REPRESENTATION ON JOB SECURITY ISSUES

A RESEARCH REPORT  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES AT  
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

FOR PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

BY

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APPROVAL PAGE

This research report was prepared by Anthony W. Sommerville under the guidance and direction of Dr. John Ritz for OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science Degree.

Approval By: John M. Ritz

8-16-04

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Advisor and Graduate Program  
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Date

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Anthony W. Sommerville

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Labor union movement is a term that refers to the efforts of workers as a group to improve their economic position. The movement consists chiefly of attempts by labor unions to promote the welfare of wage earners. But political parties and other groups have also played a part in the labor movement. Before the development of labor unions, individual laborers had almost no voice in determining their wages, hours, or working conditions. There was a plentiful supply of labor, and employers could easily replace any worker who threatened to quit. The competition for jobs forced poor people to work under almost any conditions.

Workers formed unions because their bargaining power as a group was greater than that of individuals. If all the employees in a factory or other business stopped work, it would be difficult to replace them. But early unions faced strong opposition. Courts regarded the first attempts at group bargaining as illegal, and employers refused to recognize unions as the representatives of workers.

In the United States, the labor movement began to be more widely accepted during the 1930s. (Leo, 1997) The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 and other laws required employers to bargain with unions. By 1945, more than a third of all non-agricultural laborers were union members. Today, organized labor is still a powerful economic force, even though the percentage of workers who belong to a union has declined sharply, and federal employee union members are prohibited from striking. The

highest percentage of union members is in construction, manufacturing, mining, transportation and the federal government. (Leo, 1997)

This study was conducted to determine how federal employees at the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, view the representation they receive from National Association of Government Employees union. The subsequent analysis of the results provided direction in raising the knowledge level of employees about the union and helped to increase communication between the union and its bargaining units thereby increasing participation.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction of federal government workers, union and non-union, with the effectiveness of their representation on employee job security issues' at the Logistic Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base.

#### RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of this study were to answer the following questions:

1. How do union and non-union members feel the union supports improving working conditions, seeking economic security for its members and promotes dignity and respect in the workforce?
2. How do union workers at Langley feel about the effectiveness of their representation on job security issues?

3. What is the prevalent reason why government employees at Langley choose not to join the union? By default, the union continues to represent them on job security issues?

### BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

For many years, the industries where unions were strong were those where employment was stagnant or declining. Overall manufacturing employment, for example, has fallen by about 2 million since 1980. ( Mills, 2001) By contrast, industries where unions traditionally have been weak have grown sharply. Thus employment in services virtually doubled between 1980 and 1996, from 17.9 million to 34.4 million. ( Mills, 2001) The only major growth area for unions has been government employees, where almost 40 percent of workers are now union members. (Mills, 2001) But are the increases in those numbers deceiving? Private-sector employees have long faced the prospect they could be "downsized" out of their jobs, while government employees have enjoyed near total immunity from such occurrences. But that is changing somewhat.

Since 1993, the federal government has cut 337,182 jobs -- with the Defense Department leading the list at 241,798 positions lost. (Denholm, 2003) A new word in government employment that is being heard all too often at Langley Air Force Base is RIF, better known as "reduction in force". A reduction-in-force (RIF) situation exists when the agency releases a competitive employee from his/her competitive level by, furlough of more than 30 days, separation, demotion, or reassignment requiring displacement of another employee. (Denholm, 2003)

This study, therefore, was conducted to determine how federal government workers, union and non-union, view their job security and satisfaction with their representation in the midst of a presidential administration that advocates reducing the federal work force. Non-union workers are also addressed here because even though they are not part of the union membership, they are affected by union actions, positive or negative. Many government workers at Langley, both union and non-union alike, when they talk about unions say, “they are needed, and they have done a lot of good, but...” This study hopes to find the reason behind the “but”.

### LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the civilian federal employees assigned to the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force, Virginia. Finally, the desire of some employees not to participate in the study may create further limitations.

### ASSUMPTIONS

Several basic assumptions were made regarding this study. They include:

1. Employees and union officials recognize the potential value that increasing the knowledge level, and opening up the lines of communication of everyone involved, was beneficial to the entire organization.
2. The employees responding to the survey and questionnaire are full-time workers and eligible to join the union.

## PROCEDURES

A cover letter and survey/questionnaire was developed and distributed by electronic mail to the civilian employees at the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. The responses for each question were compiled and tabulated to provide insight into how union and non-union members feel about their working conditions, economic security, and the overall effectiveness of their employee union. It also pinpoints the reasons why employees choose not to join the union.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to clarify terms used within this study, the following definitions were given:

Electronic mail (e-mail) The process of sending, receiving, storing, and forwarding messages in digital form over a network.

Union A group of workers, joined together to protect and promote their interests.

Bargaining unit All employees in a specific organization that are eligible for union membership.

## OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

In Chapter I, the problem and objectives of this study were introduced. The problem as stated was to determine the satisfaction of federal government workers, union and non-union, with the effectiveness of their representation on employee job security issues at the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. The background and significance of the study as well as the limitations, assumptions, and definitions as applied to terms used within this study were given. Also included in this

chapter was a brief description of the procedures used to collect the data and how the data would be used.

In the following chapters, a review of literature pertaining to the problem was presented. In addition, an in depth explanation of the procedures used to collect the data and how results would be used was included. The final chapters reported the results of the survey/questionnaire, presented a detailed analysis of these results, and gave the summary of the research and conclusions reached based on the findings. Viable recommendations were made for increasing the knowledge of all employees about the union. Recommendations were also made to increase the lines of communication between employees and union officials to alleviate problems and perceived misconceptions about the union.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Review of Literature provides an overview of research and published articles addressing the history and role of the union from its very beginning up until today. The researcher will review the transition of the union from its meager start as a protector of employee rights to its now powerful financial and political influence at the highest levels of government.

One can find differing attitudes when discussing the topic of union representation in today's workplace. These attitudes are shaped by the workers perception of what the union can do, or has done in the past to negatively or positively effect their employment environment. But to understand where the union movement is today, specifically at the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base, VA, it is necessary to see the history of where it has come from, and in turn, where it is going.

#### History of the Union

The roots of our country's trade unions extend deep into the early history of America. Several of the Pilgrims arriving at Plymouth Rock in 1620 were working craftsmen. Captain John Smith, who led the ill-fated settlement in 1607 on Virginia's James River, pleaded with his sponsors in London to send him more craftsmen and working people. (Miller, 2001, para. 2) Primitive unions, or guilds, of carpenters and cordwainers, cabinet makers and cobblers made their appearance, often temporary, in various cities along the Atlantic seaboard of colonial America. Workers played a significant role in the struggle for independence; carpenters disguised as Mohawk Indians

were the "host" group at the Boston Tea Party in 1773. The Continental Congress met in Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia, and there the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. In "pursuit of happiness" through shorter hours and higher pay, printers were the first to go on strike, in New York in 1794; cabinet makers struck in 1796; carpenters in Philadelphia in 1797; cordwainers in 1799. In the early years of the 19th century, recorded efforts by unions to improve the workers' conditions, through either negotiation or strike action, became more frequent. By the 1820s, various unions involved in the effort to reduce the working day from 12 to 10 hours began to show interest in the idea of federation-of joining together in pursuit of common objectives for working people. As ineffective as these first efforts to organize may have been, they reflected the need of working people for economic and legal protection from exploiting employers. With workers recognizing the power of their employers, the number of local union organizations increased steadily during the mid-19th century. In a number of cities, unions in various trades joined together in citywide federations. The Nation Labor Union (NLU), (actually a federation-an organization of local unions) formed in 1866. The NLU eventually persuaded Congress to pass an eight hour day for Federal workers. Never very strong, it was a casualty of the sweeping economic depression of 1873. (Miller, 2001, para. 5)

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was founded by Samuel Gompers in 1886. Gompers, born in 1850, came as a boy with his parents to America from the Jewish slums of London; he entered the cigar-making trade and received much of his education as a "reader" (a worker who read books, newspaper stories, poetry and magazine articles

to fellow employees to help break the monotony of their work in the shop) and became a leader of his local union and of the national Cigar Makers Union.

A statement by the founders of the AFL expressed their belief in the need for more effective union organization. "The various trades have been affected by the introduction of machinery, the subdivision of labor, the use of women's and children's labor and the lack of an apprentice system-so that the skilled trades were rapidly sinking to the level of pauper labor," the AFL declared. (Miller, 2001, para. 3) "To protect the skilled labor of America from being reduced to beggary and to sustain the standard of American workmanship and skill, the trades unions of America have been established." Thus the AFL was a federation that organized only unions of skilled workers. (Miller, 2001, para. 4)

In November 1935, John L. Lewis announced the creation of the CIO, the Committee for Industrial Organization, composed of about a dozen leaders of AFL unions, to carry on the effort for industrial unionism. (Miller, 2001, para. 7) Industrial Unions are unions that organize an entire industry regardless of skill. In short, they were unions of unskilled workers.

The CIO began a remarkably successful series of organizing campaigns, and over the next few years, brought industrial unionism to large sectors of basic American industry. At the same time the unions remaining in the AFL registered even more substantial gains in membership. During World War II, the AFL and CIO, while preserving areas of disagreement, began to find more substantial bases for working together on problems affecting all workers. In time many of the old antagonisms had died out and the old issues had been resolved. The stage was set for merger of the two labor

groups. They were united into the AFL-CIO at a convention in New York opening on December 5, 1955. (Miller, 2001, para. 8) The AFL-CIO merger and its accompanying agreements brought about the virtual elimination of jurisdictional disputes between unions that had plagued the labor movement and alienated public sympathy in earlier years. The unions placed a new priority on organizing workers in areas, industries and plants where no effective system of labor representation yet existed. In many cases, it meant crossing the barriers of old thinking and tried methods to reach the employees of companies which for years had resisted unions.

### The Declining Union

For the past forty years, there has been a steady decline in both union membership and influence. There are several reasons for such a decline, the first having to do with employers keeping their businesses union-free. Some were active in their opposition and even hired consultants to devise legal strategies to combat unions. Other employers put workers on the management team by appointing them to the board of directors or establishing profit-sharing plans to reward employees. ( Leo, 1997)

The second reason for union decline is that new additions to the labor force have traditionally had little loyalty to organized labor. Because more and more women and teenagers are working and their incomes tend to be a family's second income, they have a proclivity towards accepting lower wages, thus defeating the purpose of organized labor. ( Leo, 1997)

The third and possibly the most important reason for the decline in unions is that they are victims of their own success. Unions raised their wages substantially above the

wages paid to nonunion workers. Therefore, many union-made products have become so expensive that sales were lost to less expensive foreign competitors and nonunion producers. This resulted in companies having to cut back on production, which caused some workers to lose their jobs, and hence, unions lost some of their members. Also, the recent shift in this country towards technology and service has made our economy less reliant in the types of industrial jobs that tended to be union strongholds. Today's worker tends to be more highly educated and tends to be the professional, white-collar class. All of these have conspired to decrease union membership. This trend has been prevalent across all sectors of employment except federal workers, where membership has increased. What's caused this increase? Are these numbers deceiving? Let's take a look at unions in the federal government.

President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 on January 19, 1962, whereby collective bargaining was recognized as a right of certain Federal employees. Although the terms of the Executive Order prohibited strikes and mandated that all agreements entered into must meet civil service regulations, the stage was set for further inroads. As one commentator put it: "Kennedy's Executive Order triggered a series of bargaining laws in states with substantial private sector unionism like Michigan, New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Only a dozen state governments, mostly in the South and West, do not have some kind of mandatory bargaining law to promote public employee unions today." (Bechara, 1993, pp. 6-7) The situation in the federal government has been substantially altered by the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 which enshrined the principle of compulsory collective bargaining for most Federal employees. Membership in public-employee unions has soared during the

twenty-year period between 1960 and 1980. By 1960 eleven percent of government employees were unionized, whereas by 1980 the figure had increased to 50 percent of a total of over 15 million government employees. (Bechara, 1993, pp. 8-9)

### Summary

The review of literature provides an overview of issues related to the research questions stated in the introduction. As we move in to the next century workers rights and the security they have will become more and more an issue that reaches to the heart of the American Dream. Workers rights, worker dignity, job security- how do we protect them? But most important to the union is, what part will it play?

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods and procedures used to create and conduct the survey and compile the data used in this study. The items discussed in this chapter include: population, instrument design, data collection methods and data analysis.

#### POPULATION

The population for this study consisted of 70 full-time civilian government workers assigned to the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley AFB, VA. These workers, both union and non-union, perform logistic management duties supporting the flying mission at Langley Air Force Base.

#### INSTRUMENT DESIGN

A number of questions were developed by the researcher to gather information regarding the knowledge and attitudes of workers toward the union and its activities. These questions were based on the research goals which sought to identify possible ways to encourage workers and union officials to utilize available resources to increase communications, thereby benefiting both the workers and the union. The scope of the questions were based on viewpoints and ideas introduced in the review of literature, combined with the perceptions of the researcher, based on two years of civilian government service and 15 years of active military time supervising civilian workers. In

constructing the questionnaire, closed-form questions were used to facilitate the tabulation and analysis of data. Open form questions were also used to obtain in-depth responses from the population. The Likert scale is used for questions 2, 3, 5 and 6. The scale value is strongly agree, 5 points, agree, 4 points, uncertain, 3 points, disagree, 2 points, and strongly disagree 1 point. The intent of each question was to provide information and allow the researcher to expand on his ideas, draw conclusions and develop possible suggestions to improve the communication between the union and its bargaining units. See Appendix A for copy of the survey.

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Cover letters and survey questionnaires were distributed to each worker via e-mail. Follow-up e-mails were sent out one week later to those who did not respond to the first e-mail with seven days.

#### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The responses for each question were compiled and tabulated to provide general information on the overall knowledge of workers about the union. What were the expectations of workers toward what the union should be accomplishing? Would they join the union if it fulfilled the majority of these issues? Tables were devised to aid in comparing the percentage of union and non-union workers. Rating scales were scored by first assigning scale values to each position of response for question/statements number, two, three, five, and six. Question 4 will be used to determine the most typical reason why workers are not members of the Union. Question 7 is an open question to determine

the most pressing issues from union and non-union workers that the union should address.

## SUMMARY

This chapter provided information on how the research was conducted. The population, instrument design, and procedures for gathering, compiling and analyzing the survey data were all discussed.

The next chapter, Finding, examined the collected information about each research goal. After the information was tabulated, it could be compared for analysis. The results of this analysis will be exposed in Chapter IV.

## Chapter IV

### FINDING

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction of federal government workers, union and non-union, with the effectiveness of their representation on employee job security issues' at the Logistic Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base. This chapter contains the results of data collected from survey questions. The data were used to determine the following research goals:

1. How do union and non-union members feel the union supports improving working conditions, seeking economic security for its members and promotes dignity and respect in the workforce?
2. How do union workers at Langley feel about the effectiveness of their representation on job security issues?
3. What is the prevalent reason why government employees at Langley choose not to join the union? By default, the union continues to represent them on job security issues?

### SURVEY RESPONSE

Fifty out of seventy-two surveys were returned resulting in a 69.4 percent response rate. The survey participants were first asked to identify if they were members of the National Association of Government Employees Union. Question 1 was used to

determine the number of union workers compared to non-union workers. Table 1 provides a visual representation of this data. Questions 2, 3, 5, and 6 were designed to provide data about the attitudes of federal employees regarding the union's support for improving working conditions, seeking economic security, promoting dignity, respect and their feeling on the overall effectiveness of their representation on job security issues. Possible responses for Questions 2, 3, 5, and 6 were strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The following is a report of the information and responses for each question contained in the survey. Questions were analyzed by mean and frequency of response.

Question 1 asked, "Are you a member of the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) Union?" The percentage of participants that were Union members was 36%. Non-members comprised 64% of the respondents, indicating most employees do not belong to the union.

Question 2 asked, "The labor union is necessary to ensure management continuously stresses improving working conditions for the workforce. The highest percentage, 48%, agree the union is necessary to ensure management stresses improving work conditions for the workforce. The mean was 3.8 on a scale of 1-5 indicating most workers agree with this statement.

Question 3 stated, "Union membership increases my feelings of job security". Thirty percent of participants who belong to the union strongly agreed with this statement. The mean response for this statement was 3.7 indicating most union members agree their membership increases the feeling of job security. However, 20% were uncertain, indicating that almost a quarter of union members are not sure their feeling of job security are increased with union membership.

Table 1. Table of Survey Responses

QUESTION	Total	Pct (%)	Stat
<p>1. Are you a member of the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) Union?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>18</p> <p>32</p>	<p>36%</p> <p>64%</p>	
<p>2. The labor union is necessary to ensure management continuously stresses improving working conditions for the workforce.</p> <p>Strongly Agree (5)</p> <p>Agree (4)</p> <p>Uncertain (3)</p> <p>Disagree (2)</p> <p>Strongly Disagree (1)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>24</p> <p>5</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>28%</p> <p>48%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>6%</p> <p>8%</p>	<p>Mean</p> <p>3.8</p>
<p>3. Union membership increases my feeling of job security.</p> <p>Strongly Agree (5)</p> <p>Agree (4)</p> <p>Uncertain (3)</p> <p>Disagree (2)</p> <p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>18</p> <p>10</p> <p>7</p> <p>0</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>16%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>14%</p>	<p>Mean</p> <p>3.7</p>
<p>4. If not a union member, which of the following best expresses the reason you are not?</p> <p>a. Dues too much</p> <p>b. Never been asked</p> <p>c. Don't know enough about the union</p> <p>d. Not eligible to join</p> <p>e. As a non-member you understand that you are still covered by the union to some extent</p> <p>f. Other</p>	<p>15</p> <p>2</p> <p>10</p> <p>5</p>	<p>46.9%</p> <p>6.25%</p> <p>31.3%</p> <p>15.7%</p>	

<p>5. As a union member, you feel more secure in the fact that you'll be treated fairly and with dignity and respect by fellow workers and management?</p> <p>Strongly agree (5)</p> <p>Agree (4)</p> <p>Uncertain (3)</p> <p>Disagree (2)</p> <p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>5</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>22.2%</p> <p>16.7%</p> <p>27.8%</p> <p>16.7%</p> <p>16.7%</p>	<p>Mean</p> <p>3.1</p>
<p>6. As a federal employee, you feel the union constantly seeks economic security for its members?</p> <p>Strongly agree (5)</p> <p>Agree (4)</p> <p>Uncertain (3)</p> <p>Disagree (2)</p> <p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>18</p> <p>9</p> <p>6</p> <p>2</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>36%</p> <p>18%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>4%</p>	<p>Mean</p> <p>3.7</p>
<p>7. What do you feel is the single most important problem or issue facing the union that its leadership should be addressing immediately?</p> <p>a. Privatization</p> <p>b. Management/Worker relations</p> <p>c. Other /No answer</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9</p> <p>29</p>	<p>24%</p> <p>18%</p> <p>58%</p>	

Question 4 asked, "If not a union member, which of the following best expresses the reason you are not"? The largest percentage 46.9%, claimed not to know enough about the union. Many, 31.3%, understood that whether they belonged to the union or not, they would still be covered by its benefits.

Question 5 stated, "As a union member, you feel more secure in the fact that you will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect by fellow workers and management". The highest percentage of union members, 27.8% were uncertain that as a union member, fellow workers and management would treat them fairly and with dignity. Some members, 22.2%, strongly agreed with this statement. The mean response of 3.1 indicates most workers are uncertain if being a member of the union aids in their fair treatment at work.

Question 6 asked, "As a federal employee, you feel the union constantly seeks economic security for its members?" The highest percentage, 36% agree with this statement. Thirty percent strongly agreed. Once again uncertainty, 18%, played a large portion of how federal employees feel about how the union seeks economic security for its members.

Question 7 asked, "What do you feel is the single most important problem or issue facing the union that its leadership should be addressing immediately? This was an open question that allowed participants to voice their thoughts on a wide variety of subjects. The two most prevalent themes in answering this question were the loss of jobs in the government to privatization, and the relationship between management and workers fostering an atmosphere of respect. Twelve out of 50, or 24% of respondents felt

that privatization was the single biggest issue facing the union. Nine out of 50, 18% thought that the relationship between workers and management was the biggest issue.

## SUMMARY

Chapter IV presented the results of the survey designed to address the problem and answer the research goals. Fifty out of seventy-two union and non-union civilian employees from the Logistics Readiness Squadron responded to the survey for a 69.4 response rate. The survey data were then analyzed to determine the percentages for all questions and mean responses (based on a Likert scale) for survey Questions 2, 3, 5 and 6. Question 7 was an open question used to determine the most pressing problem or area the union should be addressing immediately. Chapter V will provide the Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for the research study.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of this study was to determine the satisfaction of federal government workers, union and non-union, with the effectiveness of their representation on employee job security issues' at the Logistic Readiness Squadron, Langley Air Force Base. This chapter summarizes the procedures used in the research study, draws conclusions based on the findings of the study, and provides recommendations supported by the research finding.

#### SUMMARY

The ultimate goal of a labor union is the economic enhancement of its members. Achieving this goal is dependent on the ability of its members to come together as a group and work toward a common goal. In the federal government, this is more difficult because of the prohibition against striking. The lack of this tactic in dealing with management, gives workers a sense, perceived or actual, that they have no leverage to negotiate with management on important issues. It was the feeling of these workers that a lack of communication with and about the union contributed in part to this perception.

In an effort to determine the views and attitudes of federal workers for the Logistics Readiness Squadron at Langley Air Force Base, a survey was developed. This questionnaire consisted of seven questions. Closed form questions were used to facilitate the tabulation and analysis of data, while open-ended questions were used to elicit in-depth responses.

This survey was sent to seventy-two civilian employees at the Logistics Readiness Squadron at Langley Air Force Base. Fifty of those surveyed responded. The responses of these workers provided the answers to the following research questions.

1. How do union and non-union members feel the union supports improving working conditions, seeking economic security for its members and promotes dignity and respect in the workforce?
2. How do union workers at Langley feel about the effectiveness of their representation on job security issues?
3. What is the prevalent reason why government employees at Langley choose not to join the union? By default, the union continues to represent them on job security issues?

The analysis of the information obtained from the survey served as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

## CONCLUSIONS

Using the data collected from this research study, several conclusions can be made based on the research goals contained in this study.

1. How do union and non-union members feel the union supports improving working conditions, seeking economic security for its members and promotes dignity and respect in the workforce?

It is the conclusion of this study that most civilian workers (48%) at the Logistics Readiness Squadron agree that the union does stress improving working conditions of the workforce. But the information that stands out is the fact that 27.8 % were uncertain about feeling more secure that they would be treated fairly and with dignity and respect

by fellow workers and management. Also 33.4 % disagreed and strongly disagreed that union membership helped in this area.

2. How do union workers at Langley feel about the effectiveness of their representation on job security issues?

The study concludes that workers believe (30% strongly agreed) that union membership increases their feeling of job security. But once again, the fact that 20% of union members are uncertain indicates that within the union better communication of what they provide needs to be emphasized and publicized.

3. What is the prevalent reason why government employees at Langley choose not to join the union? By default, the union continues to represent them on job security issues?

The study concluded that the overriding theme or reason why workers chose not to join the union is most (46.9%) feel they do not know enough about the union and its benefits.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this research study, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The union needs to increase its communication and contact with union and non-union workers alike. This could be done through weekly or monthly newsletters detailing union activities along with soliciting suggestions from workers on what problems need to be addressed.

2. The union should be addressing and giving updates to the single most important problems facing the union membership at this time, the loss of jobs to privatization and the relationship between management and workers fostering an atmosphere of respect. This can be addressed through renewed contract negotiations on the procedures and circumstances required before civilian jobs can be privatized, and this in-turn would help build an atmosphere of mutual respect.

3. The union has to address the fact that most union members do not believe or are uncertain that the union impacts their feelings of job security. The union should immediately embark on a campaign to publicize the successes and benefits of union membership and address how they out-weigh the limitations of the no strike law on all federal workers.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A- Sample Cover Letter**

**APPENDIX B- Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire**

## APPENDIX A

Dear Fellow Co-Workers:

This study is being conducted by Anthony Sommerville , a graduate student of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University and a civilian employee of the 1<sup>st</sup> Logistics Readiness Squadron, Langley AFB, in order to better understand labor unions in the federal government. This research will help both the union and employees alike to better understand how the union effects the workplace, and what services workers expect the union to provide. In August 04, I plan to publish/distribute results of this study that focus on union and worker issues based on the data provided by survey respondents.

I would greatly appreciate your completing the attached survey/questionnaire and returning it to me primarily by e-mail, or hard copy. Since the validity of the results depend on obtaining a high response rate, your participation is crucial to the success of this study. The open and closed ended questions will focus on the satisfaction of federal workers, union and non-union on their representation on job security issues. This study will last approximately two weeks.

Your return of survey/questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in this study. Please be assured that your responses will be held in the strictest confidence, and will be identified by number only. As soon as I receive your completed survey, tabulate and record it, all surveys will be destroyed immediately. If the results of this study were to be written for publication, no identifying information will be used.

The potential benefits to you from participating in the study are to increase your knowledge of the union and how it effects your work environment, whether you belong to it or not. The study may be helpful to increase your understanding of union and employee issues you were not aware even existed

### **Contact information.**

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the person(s) below:

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I hope that you will agree to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Anthony Sommerville

## APPENDIX B

**The Satisfaction of Federal Government Workers Assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Logistics  
Readiness Squadron, Union and Non-Union, with  
Their Representation On Job Security Issues**

**Purpose:** This study is designed to determine the views and attitudes of federal workers assigned to the Logistics Readiness Squadron on the effectiveness of their representation on job security issues at Langley Air Force Base.

Your responses will be kept confidential, and there will be no connection made between your responses and your specific survey.

**Directions:** Please circle, check, or bold the appropriate responses to the following statements and answer questions as thoroughly as possible . Please e-mail responses back no later than 23 June 2004

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- 1) Are you a member of the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) Union?
  - a) yes
  - b) no
  
- 2) The labor union is necessary to ensure management continuously stresses improving working conditions for the workforce
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Uncertain
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
  
- 3) Union membership increases my feelings of job security.
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Uncertain
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree

4) If not a union member, which of the following best expresses the reason you are not?

- a) Dues too much
- b) Never been asked
- c) Don't know enough about the union
- d) Not eligible to join
- e) As a non-member you understand that you are still covered by the union to some extent
- f) Other \_\_\_\_\_

5) As a union member, you feel more secure in the fact that you'll be treated fairly and with dignity and respect by fellow workers and management?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Uncertain
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

6) As a federal employee, you feel the union constantly seeks economic security for its members?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Uncertain
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

7) What do you feel is the single most important problem or issue facing the union that its leadership should be addressing immediately?