

# Communications Strategy

# Interview Tips for Union Activists

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# **Media Interview Prep**

#### Things to confirm with reporter:

- What topics will be discussed and what if anything is off-topic
- Is interview for print or broadcast? If for radio/TV, will it air live or later?
- Sourcing ask to be attributed as a union leader/member

#### Your homework:

- Draft/review talking points
- Practice delivering your answers before the interview
- Be ready!







# **Preparing for an Interview**

#### Carefully review and practice talking points and common questions before interview.

• Know which 2-3 key points you definitely want to make going into the interview and say them out loud to yourself.

#### Press answers should always:

- Be concise and to the point, avoid run-on answers
- Repeat part of their question so it can make an easy "sound bite"
- Always explain the "why," not just the "what" and "how" of your response. For example, when talking about federal pay, don't just say we need a 3.6% pay raise. Talk about how recent pay/benefit cuts have forced millions of feds to delay buying a home, sending kids to college, and putting food on the table, and how this pay adjustment will help make up for lost ground.
- Address the reporter by name during intro and outro



# **Nailing the Interview**

#### Assume you are always on the record and always being recorded (video and audio)

- Never say you're speaking "off the record" especially to large groups of reporters
- Some exceptions can be made for long-trusted reporters, but these are very few

#### Avoid being overly-friendly with reporters in front of other reporters/official audiences:

• They will write less-favorably about us to compensate for any perceived bias.

#### If asked about an unfamiliar subject or piece of legislation:

• Say "I don't have all the facts right now, but we're reviewing it closely and I will have someone follow up with you," then pivot back to your talking points on the issue you're there to discuss.

#### When interviewing on camera:

- Wear a solid-colored shirt and tie
- Push your glasses to the top of your nose so they do not block your eyes/reflect light
- Assume the microphone is always on and recording for broadcast
- Sit still with hands folder in front of you.



### Always Identify Yourself as a Union Member or Officer!

Always be very clear to identify yourself in your union role, be it an officer or member. Do not ever claim to be speaking as a federal employee or agency employee, or ever speak using your job title unless authorized to do so by your agency.

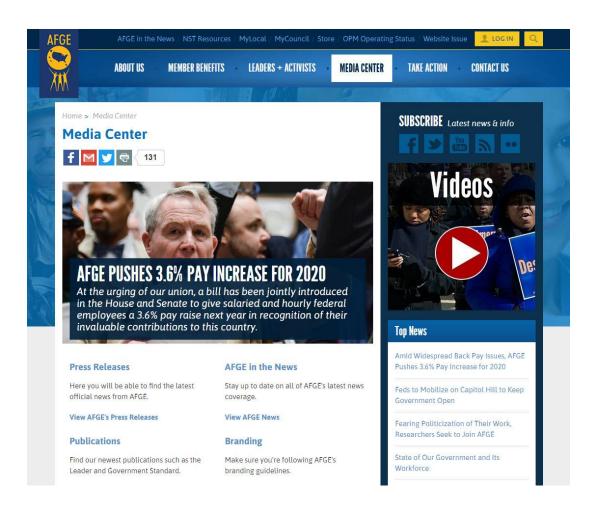
As long as you identify yourself as speaking only as a union activist/officer, the agency cannot prevent your ability to speak to the press over issues of labor relations.



#### Do Your Homework!

#### RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

- Press Releases: <u>www.afge.org/press-</u> releases
- News articles: <a href="https://www.afge.org/articles">www.afge.org/articles</a>
- Issue Papers: <u>www.afge.org/issuepapers</u>
- Talking Points: <u>www.afge.org/takeaction</u>
- Logos and other visuals: <u>www.afge.org/logos</u>
- Photos on www.flickr.com/afge



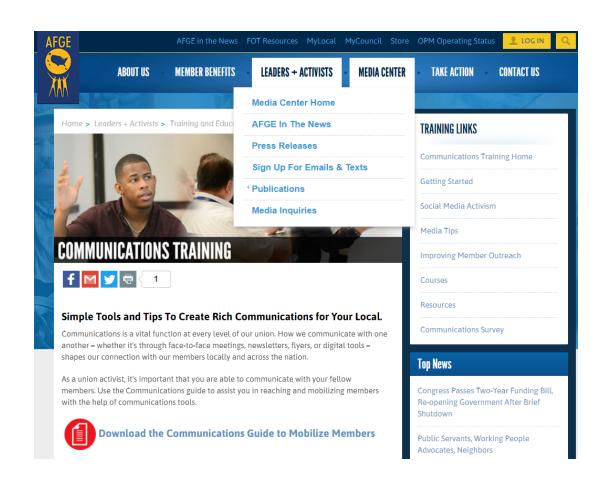


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- Digital and social media tools
- Photo and video tips
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# Contact Us

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