



THE TECHNICIAN

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DUTY ● DIGNITY ● DEDICATION

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CAPITOL HILL
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Thankful and Grateful....

As we move into the holiday season and come to the closing of the year 2024, this is also the end of my term as your National President.

These past three years have been an experience I will never forget. When I joined ACT as a technician on our beautiful island of St Croix in the US Virgin Islands, if someone would have told me then that I would be the national president of this wonderful organization I would have laughed.

Circumstances demanded that I step in and step up, which I did. There were good times and trying times but through it all, there was always a lesson to be learned and the good of ACT was always at the forefront.

I would like to thank Terry & Deanna Garnet for their guidance and training.

I would like to give special thanks to Tim Keesecker whose term is also ending. I know you made great sacrifices to see your position through to the end. I would also like to give a special thank you to James Jones. Your insight, objectivity and straight-shooter attitude has been an asset on this board, and I know that will continue with the incoming board. My final special thanks go to the one and only Pete Rendon. He came to the board with a wealth of history and knowledge. His guidance and life lessons have been invaluable. Your truthfulness and sense of fairness has also been an asset to ACT. One thing I know for sure is that your moral compass has never wavered off course and we need more of that in ACT. I am leaving this position proud to not only call you a colleague but also friend.

We can never serve our membership without the hard work of our field reps, and I thank you all for your untiring service to our members. Your dedication and relentless fight to ensure the rights of our members in the workplace is awe inspiring.

To our legal rock stars:

Neil Bonney, you were literally there with me at the beginning of this journey. You and your team have been amazing, and I thank you. I also appreciated the words of encouragement you've given me over the years. They were truly invaluable.

Dan & Susan, I've been amazed by you ever since we met and I'm still amazed. Your love of not only the law but also for ACT shines through. I want to thank you for all you have done and continue to do for ACT.

As we go through this holiday season let us remember all those who are unable to be with their loved ones. Check in on a fellow member this season, you may never know how much a call or visit will be appreciated. I want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas/Feliz Navidad and a joyous and peaceful New Year!

As we go forward, let us not forget that we (from the chapter level all the way to national) are on the same team and to the incoming board I say, "Go forth and do great things".

To the membership of The Association of Civilian Technicians, I would like to say Thank you for the privilege of serving as your President for the past three years.

Keep The Faith,

Felicia Neale

**President
Association of Civilian Technicians**



A FAREWELL

As I near the end of my service to ACT I just wanted to say what an honor and privilege it has been for me to service since 1995. I became a Steward that same year. My philosophy as a Steward was to always settle the issue at the lowest level possible (nobody likes HQ in their business). I encourage you to do the same.

I assumed the office of Treasurer of Cornhusker Chapter #88 of Nebraska in 2000. A position I held until 2021. My philosophy was and is to protect the members money at all costs. Monthly financial accountability at meetings is necessary. I never let anyone have a debit card after I had seen all the misuse of debit cards by other Chapters, much to the frustration of a few Chapter Presidents. No one person should have access to the members' money without oversight. I assumed the duties of ACT National Treasurer in 2017 and will serve out my remaining time in this position until the end of the year.

I have genuinely enjoyed serving Technicians over these years. I have been challenged throughout my time with ACT. I will deeply miss working with some of the best people in the world. I am pleased to see new folks on the ACT Board. I believe that people on the Board should reflect the membership. I have the utmost faith in the future of our organization. My hope and prayer for ACT is to prosper, grow and continue to serve our members.

Keep The Faith,
Tim Keesecker



2025 NATIONAL BOARD



**ACT NATIONAL PRESIDENT
RICHARD WRENN**



**ACT EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT
PETE RENDON**



**ACT NATIONAL SECRETARY
JAMES JONES**



**ACT NATIONAL TREASURER
PATRICK STRAKA**



**ACT VICE PRESIDENT
MATHEW CARPENTER**



**ACT VICE PRESIDENT
JEFF OSBORN**



**ACT VICE PRESIDENT
THOMAS MCGILL**



**ACT VICE PRESIDENT
RELISHA KOHN**

GREETINGS FROM SUSAN REYES, OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Hi! My name is Susan Reyes and I am the new office manager of the ACT National Office in Woodbridge, VA. I am originally from Sumter, S.C. and grew up on a farm with four younger siblings. I am a mother to two adult children, Michelle and Jose Luis. My husband, Jose, is from El Salvador and we have lived in the Northern VA area since 1996. Hablo Español, tambien – mucho gusto! To add, we are a Rugby family! I love Rugby because of the values the game instills and for how the game is played – with continuity. Much like the sport of Rugby, the National Guard embodies similar values and you all make it so there is a continuity of operations on which communities and our nation as a whole, depends.

I have always believed in destiny and do so even more now that I am the office manager. In December of 2023, I was tired of my hour and a half commute, each way, from my home in Woodbridge, VA, to a law firm in downtown D.C. I saw an ad for an office manager near my home but the job description was more for an attorney. I applied anyway. December passed and I welcomed the new year with open arms and hope that I'd be chosen for an interview. During my commute, I remained positive, listening to movies on Netflix, 80's music and foreign language audio books, mainly in Turkish – not that I understand Turkish but it kept me awake. I received an email, in the beginning of January and took an online assessment. I never heard back and thought, oh well, they found someone else. On February 2nd, I was sitting outside George Washington University, before heading into the office and something told me to send an email to ACT, just to check in and see if they had settled on a candidate. Later that morning, I was informed of a reorganization and that my position had been cut. I accepted severance and my last day was Monday, February 5th. While I was driving home on that Monday afternoon, kind of feeling happy about not having the commute anymore, I received an email from Peter Rendon with ACT. I couldn't believe it – I'd been granted an interview! Long story short, I went for an interview on Friday, February 9th and started as the new office manager on March 11th. I embrace this new learning opportunity because of the short commute, but mainly because I have never before had the good fortune of working for members with such an important mission.

GREETINGS FROM SUSAN REYES, OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER, CONT.

I am grateful for you all, our service men and women technicians of the Air and Army National Guard. I am grateful for the board members who have trained me (continue to do so) and welcomed me into the ACT family. I am so proud to say I work for this association and look forward to getting to know you all at our upcoming National ACT Rally, February 4th through the 8th, 2025, in Alexandria, VA. The national office is open Monday through Friday and I welcome anyone who is in the area if you'd like to stop by. Please feel free to email me at sreyes@actnat.com.

Thank you for your service!



All ACT Family

WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY
CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

MAY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON
BRING YOU JOY, PEACE, AND TIME
TO CELEBRATE WITH LOVED
ONES. HERE'S TO A BRIGHT AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR AHEAD!

AND

GET SOME REST...CAUSE 2025 IS
ALMOST HERE. 😊

THANKS FOR ALL YA'LL DO FOR
ACT...KEEP THE FAITH,
DEANNA & TERRY

ARIZONA ARMY CHAPTER 61 RECOGNIZES SHOP STEWARD'S MILITARY ACHIEVEMENT

JULIO ROMERO

ACT 61 FMS #6 Flagstaff, AZ Shop Steward Mr. Emmanuel Bekis from the Navajo Tribe recently earned one of the highest marksmanship badges. The U.S. Army Distinguished Rifleman Badge.

Emmanuel Bekis has been a long-time member of the Arizona Army Chapter #61 representing ACT members in the northern Arizona region.

Congratulations on your achievement and thank you for stepping up and helping represent our members in Northern Arizona.

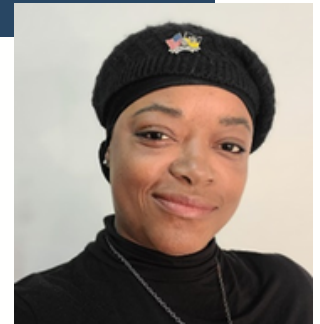


SSG Emmanuel Bekis



Family L-R: Raiden Bekis, Emmanuel Bekis, Remington Bekis, Raina Bekis, and John Bekis

ACT MSPB WIN!! MONTANA TREASURER STATE ARMY CHAPTER 57 JULIO ROMERO



Mrs. Abenayaa Lane was terminated from her position as a Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist with the Montana Army National Guard on September 24, 2022. Five days before her settlement Last Chance Agreement (LCA) expiration. The Agency claimed she violated her LCA and charged her with Failure to Follow Instructions, the agency claimed Mrs. Lane failed to follow instructions when she had her assigned GSA tires replaced after being informed by a maintenance servicing vendor the GSA tire threads were below operating safety standards and needed to be replaced, GSA fleet management approved the replacement and informed Mrs. Lane she would have been liable for damages by operating the vehicle knowing the tires were below operating standards. Mrs. Lane's supervisor was made aware of the vehicle's tires needing to be replaced and the safety risks he still claimed he never gave her approval and wanted to wait to turn in the vehicle for a new model, which the Agency had been waiting to do for over a year and still at the time had no turn-in date. But still expected Mrs. Lane to use the vehicle to perform her job. The GSA tire replacement was the Agency's basis for her termination.

Mr. Neil Bonney took her MSPB case on October 4, 2022, and timely filed her petition for appeal challenging her removal from Federal service effective September 24, 2022, pursuant to a Last Chance Agreement (LCA). On or about June 27, 2024, the MSPB Judge ordered the agency to cancel the removal and to retroactively restore the appellant effective September 24, 2022 and ordered the agency to pay the appellant by check or through electronic funds transfer for the appropriate amount of back pay, with interest, and to adjust benefits with appropriate credits and deductions to include payment of attorney fees.

Mrs. Lane returned to her previously held position on July 29, 2024, and after DFAS determined her lost wages and military orders pay adjustments she received \$31,000 in back pay.

Great work Mr. Bonney



LEGISLATION UPDATE

LES HACKETT/ ACT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

In January 2025 the legislative calendar will reset, and congress will begin the first session of the 119th Congress. As I have relayed in the past, all the bills that were introduced – but not passed into law - in the 118th Congress will die, and any desired legislation will have to be re-introduced.

As you know we had an National election in early Nov. Although most incumbents will be returning to Congress there will be some new members taking office in Jan. So, as we move into the first session of the 119th Congress our goal is to present and educate all members of congress concerning ACT's desired legislation. We are currently developing our legislative issue papers that will be included in our packets we will be presenting to congress at our rally in Feb. Our focus initially should be on gaining support from both House and Senate members to work toward passing our legislative goals. Just a quick primer on the legislative process. First, a representative sponsors a bill. The bill is then assigned to a committee for study. If released by the committee, the bill is put on a calendar to be voted on, debated or amended. If the bill passes, it moves to the other house of congress. If the other house passes similar legislation, a conference committee made of House and Senate members works out any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The resulting bill is returned to the House and Senate for final approval. The Government Publishing Office prints the revised bill in a process called enrolling. The President has 10 days to sign or veto the enrolled bill.

Unfortunately, we have found the normal process – outlined above – rarely results in passing legislation. Most bills never make it out of committee. Thousands of bills are introduced during each congress with just a small fraction being passed. Our goal continues to be to get representatives to sponsor/ introduce legislation, but we believe that utilizing the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is our best vehicle to get our legislation passed. The NDAA is considered “must pass” legislation each fiscal year and has been passed for each fiscal year since the late 1950s. That makes it a good vehicle for attaining our legislative goals. Therefore, it is very important that we educate members of the Armed Service Committee members on our legislation. Our ultimate goal has been to get an Armed Service committee member to include our language in the NDAA during its development and passage. We will call this the NDAA method.

LEGISLATION UPDATE CONT.

LES HACKETT/ ACT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

A good example of the NDAA method is our efforts to increase military leave for federal employees who are members of the Guard and Reserve. During our Feb. rally last year, we educated Rep. Derrick Van Orden's (R-WI) staff on the need to increase military leave. As a result of our efforts Rep. Van Orden introduced H.R. 7576 to increase military leave from 15 to 30 days each year. Last spring his office began working with Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) (who is a member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC)) to place the language of H.R. 7576 into the 2025 NDAA. Eventually she was able to convince her colleagues on the HASC to include language in the 2025 NDAA to increase military leave from 15 to 20 days. We are very hopeful that we will see an increase of 5 days of military leave in the new year once the 2025 NDAA passes. So, I expect that the NDAA method will continue to be our preferred method to get our legislation passed.

Our legislative packets for the 2024 rally will include:

Update the "Technician Act"

ACT will include an issue paper urging congress to amend Title 32 Section 709 to update the "Technician Act" to ensure that the program can continue to recruit and retain Guard technicians to support the states Guard units. Some amendments we will propose should ensure technicians would have some expectation of being able to reach FERS retirement eligibility if their military career is cut short, enjoy the same appeal rights as other federal employees when facing adverse personel actions and ensuring they receive the same benefits - like reenlistment bonuses - as all other Guard and Reserve members.

TRICARE Reserve Select

Currently FEHB eligible individuals are not eligible for TRICARE Reserve Select until after 1 Jan. 2030. We have been bringing this issue to congress since TRICARE Reserve Select was enacted in 2006. The TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) eligibility issue for Feds seems to get a lot of verbal support on the Hill during the 118th Congress but unfortunately this verbal support did not result in legislative action to fix the problem. ACT will include an issue paper with legislation to enable FEHB eligibles to be immediately eligible upon enactment of this legislation on enactment rather than the current Jan. 1, 2030.

LEGISLATION UPDATE CONT.

LES HACKETT/ ACT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Firefighter legislation

Unlike other federal workers, federal fire fighters receive only partial retirement credit for their regularly scheduled work shift. Currently, the federal government's firefighters work a 72-hour week, of which 19 hours are considered mandatory overtime. They are paid time-and-a-half for their overtime service, but when the government calculates their retirement pay, it treats all 72 hours as regular work time. The Federal Firefighter Pay Equity Act would require the government to treat time federal firefighters spend on mandatory overtime as overtime for the purposes of making their annuity calculations, which are based on an average of the highest three years of a retiring worker's salary. The bill would also establish a new provision that would make a major change to federal firefighters' working conditions. It mandates that the Office of Personnel Management develop regulations to establish that firefighters' "regularly recurring" workweeks max out at 60 hours, rather than the current 72 hours. ACT will include an issue paper with legislation that will correct this situation for our firefighter brothers and sisters.

Stop conversation of Technician Positions to AGR Tours pending study

Since FY 2019, Congress - at the request of the Air National Guard (ANG) - has reduced the ANG technician end strength by over 8,000 authorizations while increasing the ANG AGR end strength by almost 10,000 authorizations. through the National Defense Authorization ACT legislation. All reports and studies concerning the mix of fulltime support personel for the Guard (in this case technician vs. AGR) have shown technician civilian employees are less costly to the taxpayer and many cases more effective in performance of their duties than AGR personel. ACT will include an issue paper that calls for congress to update study/ report data that reflect the

If you have any questions or need assistance getting ready for the rally in Feb., send me an email and I will assist you in any way I can. lhackett@actnat.com
ACT has been working for many years to realize our legislative goals.

LEGISLATION UPDATE CONT.

LES HACKETT/ ACT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Our experience tells us support for and getting our legislation enacted into law can be slow and sometimes very frustrating. But hopefully the increased military legislation passes in the next few weeks which will be a good example that our efforts can pay off if we persist in our efforts. Working together, I believe we can realize our legislative goals, but it can be a slow slog, we just have to keep doing the work and present our case to Congress.

Keep the faith.

Les Hackett/ ACT Legislative Director





Registration and hotel room booking is available.

Registration information is also on our website:

<https://actnat.com/>

Attendees may either:

Call the reservations center at (800) 362-2779

(Guests preferring to call in their reservation will need to provide your group code "CTD")

or

Book online via the hotel's website: Embassy Suites by Hilton Alexandria Old Town

2025 NATIONAL RALLY

2025 RALLY DELEGATE REGISTRATION

RALLY DELEGATE FORM PAY SITE:

[HTTPS://UNIONONLY.IO/O/REGISTRATION/DELEGATE-FORM](https://uniononly.io/o/registration/delegate-form)

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU ALL IN
FEBRUARY!**



ASSOCIATION OF CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS

YOUR ONLY CHOICE TO PROTECT YOUR BARGAINING RIGHTS

DUTY...DIGNITY...DEDICATION

19TH THE TECHNICIAN

SINCE 1960

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