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GAO employees seek to unionize

Hundreds of Government Accountability Office (GAO) employees are organizing a union to ensure that worker concerns are recognized by the agency's leadership, union representatives announced Thursday.

"Our views were disregarded," said one GAO analyst speaking on the condition of anonymity. "Employees haven't had much of a voice. We don't have much of a forum to put forth our views."

Among several other matters, a reclassification of staff in late 2005 made many people "very upset," because it was based on performance appraisals that had problems, the employee continued.

For example, African Americans have allegedly gotten lower ratings than other groups in the appraisals.

"[The] GAO wants to be a model agency for the rest of the federal sector, but its new personnel system has become a model of what not to do," said Greg Junemann, president of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. "GAO's management has had insufficient regard for concerns expressed by individual analysts or the agency's Employee Advisory Council."

GAO has been named one of the best places to work by Washingtonian magazine.

David Walker, the head of GAO, was unavailable for comment.

-- Kelly McCormack

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