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Take The Contract Quiz

Answer True or False:

1. An employee can file his or her own grievance but only NTEU has the power and right to take a case to arbitration.
2. When you have a problem, your options under the contract are limited to filing a grievance.
3. The contract gives you time on the clock during the work-day to meet with a union representative if you have a problem, question or just want some advice.
4. If you file a grievance over your performance appraisal, only NTEU representatives have a statutory and contractual right to get documents relevant to your claim, such as your manager's back-up notes, agency reports on your performance or sanitized copies of other similarly-situated employees' evaluations.
5. Simply completing the Standard Form 1187 in Article 10 makes an employee an NTEU member.
6. No matter what your job is at the IRS, under Article 10 of the contract you pay the same dues as every other IRS employee.
7. The contract allows NTEU to appoint attorneys to represent employees, when appropriate.
8. You have no control over the leadership of your local NTEU chapter.
9. The National Treasury Employees Union represents only Treasury Department employees.
10. Only NTEU members get to vote to ratify

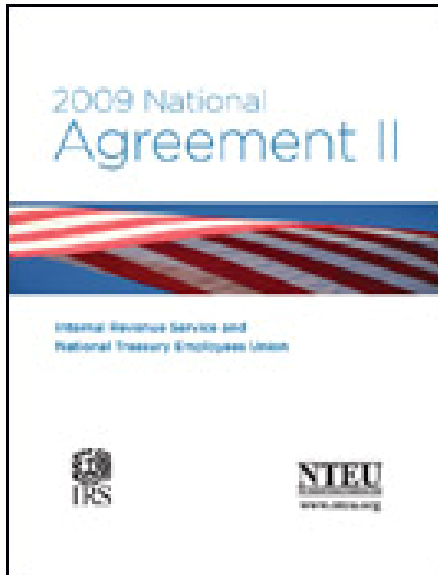
a new contract and they have access to information that non-members do not.

How did you do? Don't know? Where are the Answers? Well, the answers are inside the cover of your Contract. You can spend time reading it or you can just shrug your shoulders shake your head and continue your IRS career ignorant of the answers. Or if you are a member you can ask your NTEU Chapter 73 steward.

One of the advantages of being an NTEU member is the access to well trained stewards that can answer your contractual questions and provide you with help when you need it.

If you are not a member now is a great time to join. NTEU is committed more than ever in working for your rights both locally and nationally. We are committed to providing you highly trained stewards to represent you in your dealings with IRS management.

How do you join? See a steward or another member or come to the office complete a Form 1187 and the rest is easy!



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Straight From The President's Desk

By Jackie Huff Chapter 73 President

What!!! My health care premiums are going up AGAIN!!!

It seems like everywhere you turn you are bombarded with news regarding healthcare. Healthcare is all over the TV and radio. It's front page news in the paper and one of the primary topics of conversation at the water cooler. So I would like to add my two cents into this conversation.

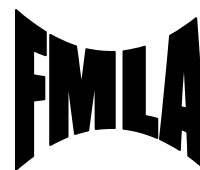
Healthcare reform can begin right here at the IRS. Everyday employees come to my office and present me with the same facts. They were out sick and legitimately request sick time. They even go so far as to provide management with a doctor's note. They jump through all the hoops only to be told that medical documentation is not acceptable. Not acceptable!!! What is worse is that management will not tell the employee what needs to be on the note to make it acceptable. Management casually hands out AWOL leaving the employee both empty handed and confused.

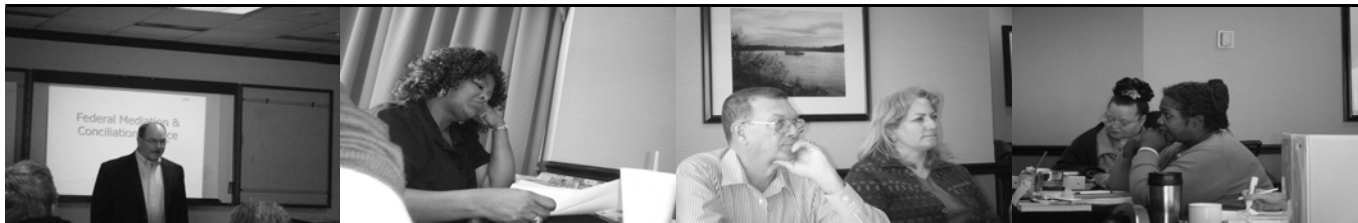
This type of situation is escalated in the arena of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Many employees who request FMLA are terrorized by management. They are left financially crippled by management's denial of FMA forms. These employees submit forms completed by their doctor, only to have the forms denied by management, who again deems them not acceptable without cause. The employees are then sent back to their doctor repeatedly to obtain updated and revised documentation, only to have the vicious cycle repeated. This vicious cycle is not simply a physical, mental, and financial drain on the specific employee involved, (who is likely being charged with AWOL, billed multiple co-pays, and facing charges for com-

pleting the FMLA documents to the tune of \$75 a piece), but it is a drain on the whole healthcare system!

These additional appointments, frivolous requests for repeated forms, and bills to the insurance company are directly driving up the healthcare cost for all of us! While you are inundated with news of healthcare reform, while you sit in the crowded doctor's office waiting hours past your appointment time to be seen, and while you watch your healthcare premiums skyrocket, please remember to thank one of the responsible parties; IRS MANAGEMENT!

It is important to know your rights. Come to the union office. We can offer you the protection you need. If you are not a member sign up! We have the knowledge and educated steward staff to conquer the ignorance management is exhibiting over the contract and the law! Why leave it up to management to play doctor with your medical condition. Prior to freely handing over your medical documentation to your manager because they say it will "speed up the process" think twice about doing so because it has been proven not to be the case. Let the union educate you on this matter and or your manager.





NTEU "WORKING HARDER and SMARTER"

By Dwight Cornett, Vice President NTEU 73

NTEU FALL TRAINING 2009 (October 19 - 23) is over and with that many new facts were shared that will help NTEU in their continued efforts to protect member's rights. President; Jackie Huff opened the NTEU 2009 Chapter 73 Fall Training session with special message of appreciation to the stewards for their hard work and dedication to preserving the contract rights of the employees and the union.

Then stewards began the 5 full days of "hard at it" aggressive training. Stewards were taught many new things from NTEU Chapter 73's two (2) field reps from Chicago. Eric Bruce and hi boss Michael McAuley presented the steward force with 3 days of very enlighten clarification and training on the many changes in the new contract (National Agreement II). A guest speaker (Dan Judy) from the free federal Mediator group spoke of mediations inside the federal government. NTEU's initial take on this is this could be just one more tool in serving it's members if management can be convinced that this free federal mediator service could help in the frequently backed up grievance process. Many topics were covered and nearly all of the new contract changes were covered and clarified.

The question and answer sessions and sharing of some of the stewards experiences backed up by the field reps take on the issues seemed to be enjoyed by the stewards the most. This made it easy to relate to each situation instead of just hearing things out of the book.

Now we have to put what we have learned to work for you the MEMBERS. Remember NTEU is here everyday protecting "member's rights". If you're not a member you should be. Contact any steward or stop by any of the offices get your 1187 and sign up today.

Join NTEU



NTEU Swapper !!!Buying, Selling or Trading!!!

Items For Sale, Trade, or FREE. Apartments and Houses for rent or sale along with vehicle sales, trades and anything else you would like to get rid of etc. Place your articles on the www.NTEU73.org for all members to see. Advertisements will be kept on the web site for 30 days. Get on the Web site and see what has already been posted or follow the instructions to place an ad of your own.

NTEU73 Union Office Hours

Fourth Street Office

Monday—Friday 7:30 A.M.—1:00 A.M.
(859) 669-5370

Gateway Center Office Room 511

Monday—Friday 6:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M. & 7:30 P.M.—11:00 P.M.
(859) 669-5700

Industrial Road Retention Center

Monday—Friday 7:00 AM.—3:30 P.M.
(859) 669-5024

Not a Union member?

***Missing out on all the benefits Union membership brings?
Join Today!***

Charities Foundation Alive, But How Well?

IRS is a lot of things and one is a rumor mill. The latest to come across the Force's desk is that the Charities Foundation can no longer meet the requirements of a 501 3C status. *The Force* contacted Micki Sullivan who is in charge of the Charities Foundation to learn the truth. Micki emphatically stated that there was no truth to the rumor. That the Foundation's 501 3C status was never in jeopardy. However there is a problem that may be a crisis in the making for the Foundation. This year the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) rules have been changed from previous years. One of those changes that funds from raffles, auctions, bake and yard sales can no longer designate where the funds go. Group funds must go into the General Fund of CFC. Only individual donations can be designated. A large portion of the Charities Foundation funding came from those raffles etc. So obviously there is a huge question as how the changes in the rules will affect the monies available and therefore the services that the Foundation can provide to employees in need. *The Force* suggests that each employee when completing their pledge card consider directing at least part of their donation to the Charities Foundation. If enough employees remember the Charities Foundation at pledge time then maybe they will not see a drop in their funding. Thus maintain the level of services to needy IRS employees.

I Will"

Jim Sorrell

I've passed those "I Will" Statements on my way to the Cafeteria on the Third Floor of the Gateway Center and noticed how much they resemble Post Office Wanted Posters. I wondered if the people contributed text freely or were pressured for input. I discovered part of the answer when my manager told our team that we and the other teams in Collections Operations must come up with team "We will" statements. We submitted a statement, to play nicely with the other teams. Maybe this will nudge one fellow I know who reads magazines and novels during IRS time, and nurses one program along all night, to become a real team member. What kind of Center would this be if the medical staff, guards, and the cleaning crew had to come up with 'I Will' statements? How about the outside street cleaners and the Rumpke drivers? We have agreed to give eight hours of effort for eight hours of compensation. We are expected to be treated fairly and we expect others to earn their pay checks the same as we do. Do we have to put our intentions into written form? I finally decided to give my own "I Will" statement. "I will use the resources, training, and information I have before me to quietly work my cases. I will ignore

the 'I Will' statements made by others. I will fuss with IDAP when it blinks at me when I call for IA-GREE and it tells me I took too long to input a letter. I will leave my desk in a rage when AMS/DI freezes on me and no amount of key pounding will get its attention. I will deal with the many interruptions and inventory changes forced on me daily, even hourly. I will leave my cubicle at shift's end and resume a life away from Internal Revenue Service. And I will come back the next work day and do it all again!"



**September Winner
Barbara Courtney**



The Force

"NTEU73's Hard Hitting Newsletter"

President: Jacqueline S. Huff
Vice President: Dwight Cornett
Secretary: Julia Wiley
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"To Organize Employees to Work Together To Ensure That Every Federal Employee Is Treated With Dignity and Respect."

Letters We Like Getting...

To Shirley Porter
I just wanted to Thank you so much for all your help yesterday. You gave me the strength to say thing in the meeting that needed to be said. I think you did a great job and can not thank you enough. I hope now she will back off a little and just let me do my work.

Thank you again.

Katrina Smith.

Dear Heather,

I just read the latest edition of *THE FORCE*, as always good information. I would like to add my 2 cents regarding the way sick employees are treated. I personally was sick, I missed 3 days of work. I had a fever for 7 days, coughing, chills, nausea etc. I went to the doctor on Saturday. I came back to work on the following Monday with a doctor's note, copies of my prescriptions etc. I also had to go back to the doctor on Wednesday so I came in late, I had to get another prescription, blood work and a breathing treatment. My manager went to our Operations Manager because our Department Manager was out. The Operations Manager approved me for SICK LEAVE. The following week the Department Manager found out,

my manager and I were called into her office. She reversed the leave and gave me AWOL.....I feel like I have a bull's-eye on my back. I also was supposed to get 40 AWARD HRS which I unfortunately was one of several people whom the IRS messed up (still waiting to be corrected) Even knowing I should have had the time to cover it she still gave me AWOL. I of course contacted the UNION again. I have been her almost 23 years, I raised my two sons on this job by myself no help from their dad. This is my life here and I have never been so sad in the fact that I work for such non-feeling people. I have had to file 3 grievances in the last 3 years all over leave, sick, AWOL etc. TPR needs some help desperately. I am one who believes that what comes around goes around. They make it so much harder than it has to be. I don't understand how they think morale could be good with these kinds of working conditions. Feel free to publish this as long as it doesn't mess with my current grievance. Thanks for putting out a good paper and trying to fight the good fight.

Sincerely,
Paula Banks
Refund Inquiry
TPR

Any repercussion from this or the grievance, let me know that is retaliation — Ed

Passages In Time



Congratulations to Chief Steward Ron Vinson on the birth of his grandson Samuel James Vinson

was born on October 1 he was 8 pounds eleven ounces.



If you have an item for the Passages in Time please email it to Heather Phillips at Heather.J.Phillips@irs.gov. Please put Passages in the subject line.

The Force reserves the right to select and or edit the content of items for print.

President Obama Signs Bill to Fix Retirement

Washington

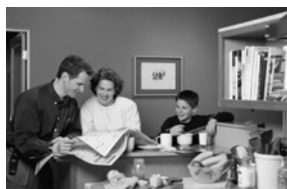
NTEU National President Colleen Kelley that the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 Bill (S.1390/H.R.2647) was signed into law by President Obama. In a memo to Chapter Presidents Ms. Kelley stated "This was the culmination of a longstanding effort by NTEU to bring fairness and reform to the treatment of tens of thousands of federal employees and retirees who will benefit from a number of changes included for the civilian workforce." Colleen went on to say "The measure includes the provisions to allow unused FERS sick leave to be counted toward the retirement calculation as is done for CSRS employees; fix the CSRS part-time anomaly so those who choose to go part-time at the end of their careers will have their pensions calculated correctly; allow former employees to redeposit their FERS retirement contributions and get credit for past time served; and, allow federal employees in Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories to participate in locality pay like other federal employees do.

Writers Wanted

Do you have writing skills?

Do you have information that is newsworthy?

Submit your article to **The Force**. If your article is accepted, we will print it with or without your name attached; your choice. Email your submission to NTEU73mailbox@aol.com or bring it to the Union office. Identify it as "article for The Force" **The Force** reserves the right to edit all articles it prints.



FEHBP and Taxation of Benefits

10/26/2009 Washington DC

NTEU has signed a letter along with other members of the Federal/Postal Coalition to preserve the integrity of FEHBP and to oppose an excise tax to fund national health care reform. NTEU has signed a key letter to all members of the Senate, including Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), who is conducting negotiations with the Senate Committees on Finance and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions to craft a compromise health reform package that can be sent to the Senate floor. A letter will be sent to the House leadership. The coalition letter expresses concern with two amendments that is being circulated in connection with the Finance Committee markup that could adversely impact the future of FEHBP. While neither amendment was accepted in its original form, the Grassley amendment was modified and passed by the Finance Committee to require members of Congress and their staffs to purchase insurance on the anticipated health exchanges. Senator Wyden did not offer his amendment subsequent to NTEU's earlier letter of opposition to it. Nonetheless, both of these amendments are still eligible to be offered on the Senate floor, and the coalition wanted to weigh in with the Majority Leader on their negative aspects. We also wanted to weigh in against using the so-called excise tax to fund comprehensive health reform. The Senate Finance Committee's version proposed imposing a 40 percent excise tax on health insurance companies for health plans valued at more than \$8,000 for an individual and \$21,000 for a family. The tax begins in 2013 and the threshold increases annually, but not as fast as medical inflation. The coalition believes that FEHBP enrollees will suffer as companies subject to the tax are likely to cut benefits and to increase premiums and co pays to federal enrollees if it is enacted. Their costs could be simply passed on to enrollees. NTEU will remain vigilant to the need to maintain the integrity of FEHBP as Congress moves forward on the comprehensive health care reform package and determine how to pay for it.

None So Blind As Those Who Will Not See

Heather Phillips

September 2009 marked the first anniversary of this column. Some may have thought it was written for comic relief, while others out of mean spirit. The truth is it was for neither of these reasons. The purpose of this column is to call to attention in a most dramatic way when managers, in *The Force's* opinion, deliberately violate provisions of the National Agreement. It is done so in the hopes that they will correct their behavior and "sin no more". With some managers the result achieved is actually that which we had hope to achieve, others are a little more stubborn. This seems to be the case with this month's winner, Denise Meyer. She seems to be bound and determine to extract her pound of flesh form employees who have the gall to contract a serious illness. Denise read my lips advance sick leave is a contractual right of your employees. FMLA is a right granted to them by federal law. Employees are entitled to use these benefits without being harassed or disciplined. Article 34 section 6 states:

"A. The Employer has determined that an employee will be given advanced sick leave when all of the following conditions are met:

1. the employee is eligible to earn sick leave;
2. the employee's request does not exceed thirty (30) workdays;
3. there is no reason to believe the employee will not return to work after having used the leave;
4. the employee has provided acceptable medical documentation of the need for advanced sick leave;
5. the employee is adopting a child or the employee or family member has a serious health condition. Advanced sick leave is not available for routine medical visits or minor illnesses; and
6. the employee is not subject to the restrictions of subsection 4A above" (which is leave restriction).

A serious illness can be the flu, asthma, migraine headaches or any other type of chronic conditions. (This list is not meant to be all inclusive.)

In regards to FMLA, while the application is pending if the employee needs to use FMLA leave it is to be granted provisionally. This could not be any clearer. It is in the FMLA law, the title 5 of the CFR and in Article 33 Section 2. Maybe you need to take time to read these.

So Denise for these reasons and for the many employees you have harmed this butt is for you.



Chapter 73 proudly presents

November Horse's



Award To
Denise Meyer

It's a choice you should not have to make: care for a new child or return to work for a desperately-needed paycheck.

That is why NTEU is supporting legislation that would give federal employees four weeks of paid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child. While the Family and Medical Leave Act gives federal employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, many new parents cannot afford to take the time off.



Join NTEU in sending a message to Congress that every federal employee deserves a chance to bond with a new child.

Visit NTEU.org and learn how you can support H.R. 626 and S. 354. It's time to make the government a real family-friendly workplace.



Are You A NTEU Member?

It All Starts with This Question



NTEU provides members with trained and experienced representatives to fight on their behalf against any charges. NTEU is there for members whenever they need us.



NTEU members have more representation than nonmembers! NTEU is under *no obligation* to represent nonmembers in connection with oral replies to proposed suspensions, adverse actions or actions based on unacceptable performance.



Win This 32" HD Digital TV

How Each member you sign up you get a chance and the employee joining gets a chance.

When October 5th through November 13th

Could be extended



All Members in Good Standing Receive a Free Accidental Death and Disability Insurance Policy



Members are eligible for: NTEU Credit Card, Short-term Disability, Long-term Care, Professional Liability, Auto and Homeowners Insurance; and Discounts on Moving Expenses, Car rentals, Hotel/Motel stays and more



Our strength comes from our membership. Each new member makes NTEU stronger—both locally and nationally. Strengthen our voice.