



## Union Delegation Meets With Congressman Massie

### Welcome Back to Returning Seasonals!

In late December, seasonal workers began to be called back to work in some areas of Submission Processing. Soon others will be following as the IRS ramps up for another filing season.

Since the seasonals were gone during the past few months, the union will be having Meet & Greets with NTEU73 President Rick Riley to update them on what has been going on, in particular regarding the shut down.

"I plan on doing regular updates as there has been a lot going on," said Mr. Riley. "We will be having some lunch-time meetings in late January or early February and I plan to include night shift."

One change of which seasonal employees are fast becoming aware is the refusal to grant advanced leave unless the leave can be reasonably paid back before the closing of Submission Processing. This affects even FMLA leave. This should affect only employees who have a large balance of advanced leave that needs to be paid back and should not affect small amounts used.

As usual, seasonal employees have been coming to the union office with release recall issues as well.

"I would like to personally welcome all our seasonals back!" said Mr. Riley. "I know we need them. As always, if you are a member and have any questions or concerns, please come to any union office or call us. We are here to help you with whatever you may need!"

A group of NTEU representatives who live in Kentucky met with Congressman Thomas Massie at his office in Crescent Springs in December. The meeting was part of a continuing union effort to save jobs at the IRS in Covington.

NTEU73 President Rick Riley presented the Congressman with a wish list of things that could help, including a request for funding from Congress that would be earmarked for the Service Center to bring other IRS work into the Covington area. Another proposal was to stop using independent contractors to do IRS work. NTEU has long opposed the using of contractors to do work that federal employees should be doing.

Congressman Massie was very supportive as he does not like the idea of losing Kentucky jobs either. He is the second Kentucky Congressional leader to which the chapter has reached out, the first being Senator Mitch McConnell.

"I am going to leave no stone unturned in trying to everything I can to save these people's jobs," said Mr. Riley. "We all understand that it is an uphill fight. But I am very encouraged at the reception we have received so far."

The annual NTEU Legislative Conference will be held beginning February 28 in Washington. Each year, National NTEU sponsors the event when

union leaders from around the country meet with their Congressmen and Senators

to push federal employee issues such as pay, benefits, etc.

"This year, I plan on being prepared to talk to these people about the reconsolidation," said Mr. Riley.

"We plan on having proposals in hand including a specific amount of funding that would be needed

to move jobs here. This is something we are working on



(l to r) Chris Pierce, Rick Riley, Congressman Massie, Laura Mitchell, Bryan Jackson and Jan Colwell.

very seriously."

The union has a team in place to deal with employee consolidation issues which is headed up by Thomascina Braswell.

(See related story, Commissioner, Pg. 5)

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## NTEU Chapter 73

**Fourth Street Office**  
Monday—Friday,  
6 a.m. —1 a.m.  
(859) 669-5370

**Gateway Office  
Room 111**  
Monday—Friday,  
6 a.m. —1 a.m.  
(859) 669-5700

**Industrial Road  
Retention  
Center**  
Monday—Friday,  
8 a.m.—10 a.m.  
(859) 594-6138

**Facebook**  
Official NTEU Chapter 73  
[www.facebook.com/nteu73](http://www.facebook.com/nteu73)

**Chapter Web Site**  
[nteu73.org](http://nteu73.org)

**Twitter**  
[www.twitter.com/nteu73](http://www.twitter.com/nteu73)

## From the Desk of the President

**“As always, At Your Service”**  
— Rick Riley

I and the staff and stewards of NTEU73 want to wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and successful New Year. In looking back over the last year, I can see where NTEU nationally and locally have had great success for our members. NTEU, when all the other organizations gave up, continued to push for a higher pay raise. The pay raise this year will be the best in 8 years. NTEU will continue to fight for better pay raises in the future. NTEU continues the fight for work life and your private life balance. We only work to provide for our families and what good is that if we can't enjoy our families more? NTEU73 is leading the nation in winning Telework for its members. Although Telework may not be for everyone, it does provide those that can work it more time with their families. NTEU73 is pushing the envelope on that and in 2017 it appears there is going to be a large success on the Telework front.

NTEU has pushed for a larger budget for the IRS and because of that, there have been more hiring on 2016 than in recent years. If you are a new hire, it is because NTEU fought for the funding for those jobs. If you are in an area with new hires, I know you think it is a blessing to have some help as the IRS has lost thousands of employees in the last few years. NTEU will continue to fight for more funding for the IRS so that we are properly staffed.

Chapter 73 is currently fighting for more jobs to come here as Submission Processing is ramping down on September 30, 2019. I have met with Senator



McCConnell's local staff and I have met with Congressman Thomas Massie. Both have pledged their help to Chapter 73. I am in continuous contact with Congressman Massie's office working on ideas to get new work here. Until I can find work for everyone here, I won't stop. This New Year brings lots of opportunities for all of us. I am looking forward to working with each and every one of the members.

We have had several lunch time meetings with employees to hear their concerns, and we will continue to do this. The Christmas luncheon allowed us to talk with employees all over the service center. We received so many compliments, but we also got to talk to employees we never get a chance to talk with about their issues. I'm looking forward to continuing this and to change more things so that we can reach every member, every event, and every time. Happy New Year!

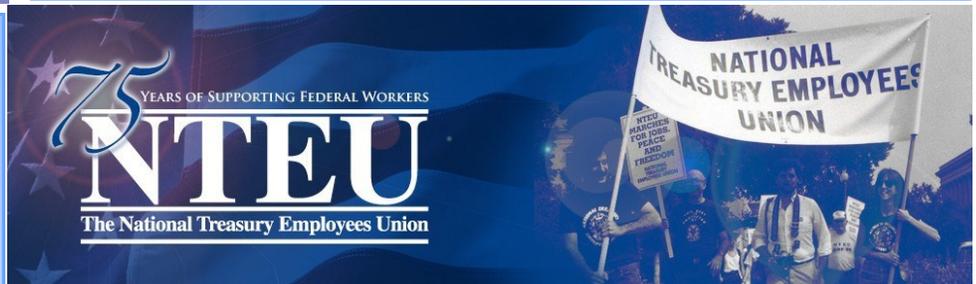


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## NTEU73 Chapter Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 2017  
Gateway Center, Room 507  
4:30 p.m.

**Get involved in your Chapter!**

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# Union Has Christmas Lunch for All Members

The NTEU73 Christmas luncheon was a success! The union served over 1,500 members lunch. President Rick Riley spent hours talking with individuals and groups last week.

“I met several members and had many conversations,” Mr. Riley said. “The closing of Submission Processing was the biggest concern of the membership,” he added “I explained all the work I am doing on this.”

“Several members came to me and the staff thanking us for reaching out with the Christmas luncheon,” he explained. “Many of them said they never did come to the Christmas Party and that this was really appreciated. Some members had questions why there was no Christmas Party. I explained that the Christmas Party in 2014 cost well over \$22,000 and that only about 200 people came, figuring a member plus a guest that was well over \$200 per member that attended. Last year’s party cost \$15,000

and only 300 people came. Using the same logic of a member plus a guest that figure came out to \$100 a member. We



**Laura Mitchell serves pizza to an NTEU73 member in the flat top during the lunch.**

learned some lessons regarding the lunch and we will carry that forward. Next year we are hoping to be bigger and better.”

Some members were displeased at this change in the union’s Christmas celebration and even threatened to withdraw as dues-paying members of NTEU73.

“Though perks like the Christmas party are nice, the purpose of dues is to ensure you get fair and equal treatment from management and a voice fighting for you in Washington,” said Steward Sarah Corea. “NTEU has fought for and won bigger raises, performance awards, telework, and many other job related issues. Many members require Union assistance for contractual violations committed by management. Without dues, these benefits would go away.”

“The union is always open to member suggestions, comments and feedback,” added Mr. Riley. “We just want to do things that benefit as many people as possible. We were spending a lot of money and a relative few were benefitting. We will do better next year!”

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## Congressman Massie Sends Letter to IRS Commissioner

Kentucky Congressman Thomas Massie has sent a letter to IRS Commissioner John Koskinen on behalf of employees in the Cincinnati Submission Processing Center. The letter comes after a meeting with NTEU73 President Rick Riley and a delegation of IRS employees.

The letter, dated December 22, is in regard to the IRS decision to end Submission Processing Operations in Covington.

“While I welcome cost saving measures in government at every opportunity and understand the IRS’s decision to streamline its operations, I also share the concerns of my constituents, some 1,800 of whom will be adversely affected by this decision,” Mr. Massie wrote.

“In the event the IRS proceeds with current plans, and on the recommendation of Rick Riley, President of the Covington chapter of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I ask that your office mitigate the impact of these closings on affected employees by providing them

with retraining opportunities that would enable them to transition to other functions within the IRS,” he said.

“Also, I would encourage the IRS to closely analyze the business case for relocating every position currently in Submission Processing,” he continued. “For example, dozens of Statistics of Income employees are allegedly facing job loss, even though there is no non-electronic aspect of their work. I have been informed that it is likely their tasks can be accomplished just as efficiently from their current location, even if the original submissions are processed elsewhere. I have also been informed that there are other functions like this that should not be Transferred out. In many cases like this, there may be no savings, as there will be a cost to setting up the unit elsewhere and no increase in efficiency.”

“I also request that you transfer affected employees to other IRS functions currently being performed in the Cincinnati/Covington metro area such as Accounts

Management (AM) and Call Sites,” he added. “Should these specific opportunities not be forthcoming, I ask that you consider expanding functions currently being performed at the IRS facility in Philadelphia, such as Automated -Collection System (ACS) and Under Reporters, to the IRS facility in Covington. “I support the IRS’s continued occupancy of the Covington facility and the employment of our constituents,” the Congressman concluded, “and it is my hope that the IRS can repurpose the facility to take advantage of the existing building and the highly capable workforce. But if circumstances require that the IRS vacate the facility, I am asking for your commitment, in conjunction with the General Services Administration (GSA), to help expedite transfer of the real-estate to local ownership so it can be developed into an asset for the community.”

The union is also soliciting help from other local Congressmen and Senators.

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# NTEU73 President Holds Meeting for Night Shift About Consolidation

A huge crowd showed up on swing shift to meet with NTEU73 President Rick Riley and NTEU Attorney Will Igoe regarding information about the coming shut down of Submission Processing. About 15 members signed up in advance for a free lunch, but when the meeting began more than fifty employees came.

Employees had many questions about the future.

Among other things, Attorney Will Igoe discussed USA jobs and the hiring process within IRS. One tip was for employees to apply both internally and externally. Sometimes, an employee can be hired externally when they are ineligible internally, so it is best to put in two applications for each job.

Many employees complained about the difficulty of using USA Jobs. The union will be offering courses, in conjunction with management, that will help people navigate the USA Jobs site.

Rick Riley updated everyone on the efforts that are being made with Congressmen and Senators.



NTEU73 President Rick Riley looks on as NTEU Attorney Will Igoe discusses consolidation issues with swing shift employees.

“I think it was one of the best employee meetings we have had, especially because of the turn out,” said Mr. Riley. “I am going to make sure I get back to swing shift more often.”

“I want to thank you Rick, Jeff and Will coming out to us here on nightshift and for making the Meet and Greet happen for all the departments left here in the flat top as it meant a lot to all of us,” Steward Debbie Stoeffel wrote after the meeting. “I thought it was uplifting for our members as well as the few nonmembers that sat in on the meeting. You gave our members a better outlook at ways they can better prepare over the next months as the ramp down comes nearer. Letting members know you will assist them in acquiring knowledge to maneuver in and around the USA Jobs application process, knowledge in seeking training and skills that may help with building and writing their resumes, and potential job fairs in the future was a big help. Plus discussing the CTAP letters, the buy outs and early retirements some members may want to consider.”

## TEGE/R&C Concerned About Not Being Permitted to Follow Their Work

Employees who work in Receipt & Control on TEGE work have been told by management that they will not follow their work, and they are none too happy about it.

Management is saying that they are not assigned to TEGE, which is the work they have been doing. TEGE works out of the downtown Cincinnati office and it was hoped these employees would move there when the consolidation occurs. However, they are being told they were never assigned to TEGE, even though at least one employee has documents that apparently show otherwise.

The contract is clear. If work is moved to

another location, employees can follow the work. IRS is not required to pay moving expenses for these situations.

Management has apparently realigned the work at some time in the past few years.

“We are saying they should just move it back to where it was originally,” commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “That way it saves all those jobs.”

Management has told employees they will have to compete for their jobs when the time comes.

“That is not our position on this issue,” said Mr. Riley. “We will be negotiating everything that happens and this is the kind of situation I have on the front burner.”

One of our strategies is to move people to different areas other than Submission Processing so that their jobs will not be in jeopardy. That is the logical thing to do and I do not believe management is intentionally trying to cheat these folks out of their jobs.”

A number of employees had come to the flat top union office to voice their concern about this issue. While they want answers, there are none that are definitive at this time.

“Employees have been told something but they have not yet been harmed,” added Mr. Riley. “Believe me, we are on top of this. It will be negotiated or grieved.”

# Riley Talking to IRS Commissioner

In addition to contacting local legislators, NTEU73 Rick Riley has been in contact with IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. He met with him here in Covington during his visit and recently sent a message to him via email. Here is Mr. Riley's email:

*Good Morning Commissioner Koskinen, Happy New Year Sir, I pray you and yours had a great holiday season. I want to thank you for naming the negotiator.*

*We have been informed that we will receive a briefing next week and hopefully we can get these started very soon. I've been thinking about this very hard and it came to me, besides the mitigating strategies already in the contract, I realized we have a real opportunity. I've outlined my ideas in the document attached.*

*Mr. Koskinen, I really do think this idea, is a good idea. We would need to flesh it out, but in the end, it would be great for both the IRS and employees. If you would like to ask me any questions, please feel free to call. I hope we can include these ideas into our negotiations when they start.*

*Thank you for your time and consideration of this. I know it is as important to you as it is to me.*

Mr. Riley received a response from the Commissioner.

In part, the Commissioner said: "I am pleased that we're starting the negotiations provided under the contract well in advance of the normal, one year timing. And I agree that we shouldn't be limited to the items specified in the contract as mitigations. As we discussed during my visit to Covington, we all have a joint interest in doing whatever we can to make sure that all 1,800 employees affected in Covington have a good landing spot at the end of the two + year transition."

"I am very encouraged with what he said and feel optimistic about getting something done to save these jobs," said Mr. Riley. "It is certainly the most important single issue of my presidency."

## NTEU73 Financial Audit Done

NTEU73 recently had another audit done on the Chapter books and all is well.

The Chapter has an audit done annually by an independent auditor. This is the fourth audit done since the election of NTEU73 President Rick Riley.

The audit was done by Accountant Melody Walsh (no relation to the NTEU73 Vice President Karen Walsh). Ms. Walsh issued a report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

"The Chapter has continued to improve its record keeping and is doing an excellent job of verifying and classifying expenditures," Ms. Walsh wrote. "The only area that could use improvement is

the gift cards and gifts that were given out. Some form of documentation should be done to track the items purchased and to whom given."



These gift cards were given out at various union events in drawings for members. NTEU73 Treasury Laura Mitchell has already instituted improvements in the record keeping in that regard.

"I was very pleased with the audit," said Ms. Mitchell. "I work hard to make absolutely sure everything is in the best order possible. I am fully aware of how important it is."

Copies of the full report are available for inspection in the union offices.

## NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

### Day Shift:

**4th Street** - A. J. Allen, Brandy Belew, Tommie Braswell, Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Ron Cunningham, Kristina Fryman-Henry, Leann Gosser, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, Bryan Jackson, Will Kohler, Krystal Lear, Shannon Lovins, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Shawana Oliver, Lori Riedinger, Jeff Seibert.

**GWC**—Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Steve Clark, Jamie Coffman, Erin Cooper, Tomeka Cottrell, Loretha Hudson, Bob Krekeler, Tanesha McCants, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (President), John Selmeier, Melinda Smith, Debbie Steiner, Dennis Stone, Rebekah Taylor, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (Vice President-Chief Steward), Julia Wiley (Secretary).

**IRRC - Florence** - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea, Brandon Mikusa.

### Night & Swing Shift

**4th Street**— Jim Gregory, Stephanie Slayton, Deborah Stoffel.

**GWC**—Alison Bower, William Dreier, John Gilliam, Teri Hampton, Julie Orick.

**NTEU73 keeps members informed with chapter news as well as national news.**

**Visit [nteu73.org](http://nteu73.org)**

**On Facebook: Official NTEU Chapter 73**

**National Web Site**

## 60 Second Updates

### No Government Shutdown...Again

With less than an hour remaining before another shutdown, the Senate voted to keep the government funded through April 28 by a vote of 63-36. The bill includes funding flexibility for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to maintain staffing levels and address the recent influx of migrants and unaccompanied children at the ports.



### Persistence Pays Off—Pay Increases to 2.1%

With the announcement, just weeks before year's end, that federal employees would see a 2.1 percent pay increase in 2017, NTEU achieved its goal of pay parity with the military.

Federal employees will receive a 1 percent across-the-board increase and an

average locality increase of 1.1 percent, for a cumulative raise of 2.1 percent.

### Administration Boosts Cap to 1.5%

In a welcome move, the administration announced it is raising the awards cap for front-line federal employees but NTEU would like to see it raised even higher. Federal agencies are authorized to spend up to 1.5 percent—up from the current 1 percent cap—of their aggregate salary spending levels on individual performance and contribution awards that will be paid in fiscal year 2017.

NTEU pushed hard to raise the cap for all federal workers who are on the front lines every day. Following the administration's decision to raise the awards cap for those in the Senior Executive Service, National President Tony Reardon sent letters to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management asking them to lift the cap on performance awards for all federal employees.

Recognizing high performers aids retention, boosts morale and improves productivity. NTEU will push agencies to exercise their budgetary authority and

devote enough resources to provide awards to front-line employees.

### Track Your Leave Easily with NTEU

As an NTEU member, you can conveniently track your leave with NTEU's Leave Records. The files come in PDF and Excel formats. In the Excel version, you can electronically record your leave for the entire year. NTEU73 is trying to get hard copies, like in the past. Check with the union office for updates.

### Holiday Message from the NTEU National President

A message was sent out electronically from NTEU National President Tony Reardon. It said in part:

"As I reflect on all the blessings in my life, I feel fortunate to be part of a great union and to be able to carry out this work, together with all of you, that is so important to fulfilling America's promise of justice and equality for all.

As we look ahead to a new year of challenges and opportunities, I'm grateful to have all of you at my side."

## NTEU73 Stewards Working for the Members

Your NTEU Stewards work for you, and are available if not in person, by phone or email. There are multiple stewards located in most Cincinnati IRS Center location. Here is a list of stewards manning the current NTEU73 offices:

### Gateway:

- ◆ Chapter President **Rick Riley**
- ◆ Vice President/Chief Steward **Karen Walsh**
- ◆ National Vice President **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Chief of Staff **Steve Clark**
- ◆ Secretary **Julia Wiley**
- ◆ Stewards **Sarah Corea** and **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Night Shift Chief Steward **Bill Dreier**
- ◆ Night Shift Steward **Julie Orick**

### Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

- ◆ Stewards **Tommie Braswell**, **Michelle Robinson**, and **Jim Gregory** (Night Shift).
- ◆ Treasurer **Laura Mitchell**
- ◆ Director of Communications **Jeff Seibert**

If you have any issues or concerns, call an NTEU73 office at 859-669-5700 or 859-669-5370.

**Sarah Corea** got AWOL changed to LWOP for an employee; AWOL changed to advanced annual leave.

**Nicole Guethlein** helped attend standards meetings when needed. She also had AWOL removed for a few employees and 2 write-ups removed. She has sent information to NTEU attorney Will Igoe on a Telework Case due to management not approving it.

**Shannon Lovins** helped an employee with an award issue and helped another employee with a release-recall issue.

**Laura Mitchell** has completed a fraud case. She also closed cases regarding awards, evaluations and an issue regarding a departure evaluation.

**Tonya Morris** is working on an equitable distribution case in Estate and Gift. She is also working on a three day suspension levels against an employee.

**Debbie Mullikin** is working several telework cases, which can take a while. Employees should be patient.

**Lori Reidinger** handled two cases involving AWOL.



# NTEU73 Steward Spotlight

Working Hard for NTEU73 Members!



**Shannon Lovins**

Shannon has been working for the IRS for about 6 years, starting in 2010. Last year she started working in ICO. She became a steward about a year ago and has been very active.

“Being a steward may not always be as easy as people think,” Shannon says. “It can be rewarding at times. Being a steward in the CIRSC has given me the opportunity to see how the service center is actually run.”

Shannon helps organize union events as part of her union duties.



**Krystal Lear**

Krystal started with the IRS in February 2009 in Receipt and Control. A relatively new steward, she has been an NTEU73 steward since August of last year.

“I became a steward because in the past few years I have helped out with new employees,” Krystal said. “I liked the idea of being able to help other people, not just new seasonal workers.”

An up-and-comer, Krystal handles cases and occasionally helps out in the Flat Top union office.



**Julia Wiley**

Julia has been a long time employee and steward, putting in over 30 years as both. She has been a full time fixture in the Gateway union office for many years and is serving her fifth term as the Chapter Secretary. She has served during three different union administrations.

“There were a lot of ‘ups and downs’ as far as being a steward is concerned,” she says. “But I always try to keep whom ever comes to that door calm.”

Julia plans to retire later in the year.

## NTEU National President Tony Reardon to Visit

NTEU National President Tony Reardon has been scheduled to visit the Covington Campus on February 1. Mr. Reardon last visited the Fourth Street Center on the morning after the shutdown was announced and at that time promised to return when he knew more about the IRS’s plans. The National President is coming in response to an invitation from NTEU73 President Rick Riley.

While the exact schedule is not set as this goes to print, plans are being made to include both day and swing shift with opportunities to meet with Mr. Reardon, hear his message and ask questions.

NTEU National Office has been very active on the issue of Submission Processing Consolidation since the announcement of the closing of three

centers, with Cincinnati being the first, scheduled to close in October 2019.

When Mr. Reardon last visited, he had literally just become aware of the IRS plans and had virtually no information about it. But he drove to Covington from Chicago the morning after the announcement to show his support of the employees here.

Mr. Reardon is in his second year as NTEU National President, taking

over for the retiring long time President Colleen Kelley.

“We are always happy to have the National President visit, but it is even more important now, with the vital issue

we have facing us,” said Mr. Riley.

NTEU and the IRS will be negotiating issue involving the shut-down and trying to come up with mitigating strategies in order to lessen the impact on employees.

“Tony is a tireless worker and is totally on our side on this. I am really looking forward to his visit,” added Mr. Riley “It should be very enlightening to get information based on the national perspective.”



**NTEU President Tony Reardon**

### Address Change?

If you have recently changed your address, please let the union know so you can continue to get information from NTEU. IRS does not share changes you made with them, so you must also tell us!

Please send any address changes to  
Jeff Seibert / NTEU73 Membership:  
[jeffrey.w.seibert@irs.gov](mailto:jeffrey.w.seibert@irs.gov)

