

## NTEU73 President Rick Riley Meets with National President Tony Reardon in Las Vegas

Never letting an opportunity go by, NTEU73 President Rick Riley met with National President Tony Reardon over lunch in Las Vegas at the annual NTEU Training Conference.

Mr. Riley spoke with both Mr. Reardon and NTEU Executive Vice President Jim Bailey about getting jobs to be sent to Covington from other areas within the IRS. Both gentlemen expressed whole-hearted support and said they are working it from the national angle.

“There is work out there that needs done and we have people here that are able to do it,” said Mr. Riley. “Tony has repeatedly made clear that the national union will do everything they can to get this done, including talking directly to the commissioner.”

Since the announcement of the consolidation of Submission Processing, Mr. Riley has made finding other work one of his biggest priorities.

“Buy-outs, early-outs, severance pay...that’s all great,” he said, “but none



NTEU73 President Rick Riley and Steward Jim Gregory at the 2017 NTEU Spring Training Conference in Las Vegas.

of their careers with the IRS.”

Meetings are scheduled to begin on June 12 in which employees will be briefed on the agreement between NTEU and IRS, with the union being present. At that time, employees should be able to begin getting definitive answers to questions regarding their future. At the conclusion of the 7114 meetings, employees will be able to meet with the NTEU73 President and Attorney Mike McAuley, who assisted in the negotiations. Mr. Riley plans to attend as many of the meetings as possible.



of it is better than getting more work into this center so that people can continue

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### NTEU73 Picnic Attendance Down: Less Non-Members

The 20th Annual NTEU73 Picnic went extremely well. After a forecast of rain all day, the weather held and people had a great time.

One difference this year was that members had to pick up their tickets at the gate, with the member being present. This was designed to prevent the practice of non-members filling the park. In the past, there have been instances of family reunions being held at the picnic as well as abuse of the ticketing system.

“That is not the intent of the picnic,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “I certainly don’t mind people bringing friends, and all. But it was getting out of hand.”

About 1,200 people attended. With the

lower attendance, the cost of the picnic plummeted. Lasts year’s picnic cost the union over \$15,000. This year it was under \$8,000.

Many who attended thought it was much better because there were not long lines for the rides and refreshments.

This was the twentieth year NTEU73 has had a picnic and all of them have been at Stricker’s Grove.

In addition to the rides and games, NTEU73 gave away prizes to kids and even gave away a 50 inch Ultra HD Smart TV to a lucky attendee.

The picnic is always held on the Saturday before Memorial Day.

See photos from the picnic on page 5.

## NTEU Chapter 73

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## ***The Force***

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## From the Desk of the President

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

### **A Day to Remember Heroes: Now You Can Become a Hero**

Memorial Day is a day we set aside to remember those who died serving our country in the military and the emergency responders. I remember the parades when I was a kid, enthralled by the military units and the WWI and WWII vets who were honored in the parade. My father and his brothers were veterans of WWII and the stories they told were amazing. I recall those stories, and the men who were there with them and I know they were all heroes. Then there were the Korean War Veterans. These men lived through some of the worst moments in combat I've ever heard of.

I grew up with the Vietnam generation, many kids I knew joined up and went to Vietnam, and not all came home. War is a horrible nightmare interrupted by long periods of boredom. Today we are living with the veterans of Desert Storm and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, we are under attack, yes, our retirement benefits are being threatened, we need to band together and fight back with every ounce of strength we have. Our



benefits and pay have been under siege for so long now, it is easy to give up and do nothing. But right now, we need to take action. If every one of us would just pick up the phone and call your congressman, or better yet, go see them in person, or a member of their staff. I think it would make a very big difference. I've known men who, while in combat, were in desperate fights, some of them in over-run situations. An over-run is when the enemy, in superior numbers, get thru or into your lines and the fighting becomes individual combat; desperate fighting for your life. Right now, Federal Employees are in that situation.

So when you get home tonight, call 1-202-224-3121 and ask to speak to your Congressman. Do it tonight and every night until they get the message; Stop the attacks on our rights and our retirement!"

## Telework Often Approved in Exam

Telework requests have died down across the center, but there could still be room for more employees to work from home in Exam. Exam has been more forthcoming in working with the union on issues than the other two operations (Accounts Management and Submission Processing) according to Debbie Mullikin, the union representative who works many of the telework cases.

"We think there is a lot of opportunity in Exam, in particular, for employees to be permitted to work telework," Ms. Mullikin said. "Eventually, we think almost everyone will be able to work from home."

In Exam, of approximately 650 employees, only 100 are teleworking, which Ms. Mullikin sees as an opportunity.

"I would urge any employee who has a desire to work from home to come and see me and we can talk about it," Ms. Mullikin added.

Currently, clerks in Exam have not been

able to work telework. But the union is working to change that, with the hopes that eventually they will.

"While there are a lot of people working telework, we think a lot more can if they wish to," said Ms. Mullikin. "It is advantageous for both the employee and the employer."

There is currently a pilot program in which telework for phone representatives in Accounts Management is being tested. This has been going on for several months and there has been no update as to the progress from NTEU National Office.

"It is something we just have to keep pushing," said Ms. Mullikin.

"Management is not going to just walk up to you and ask if you want to work from home. You have to request it from your manager. There is a process and we can help you with that process. Come and see me, and we will try to get it done!" she said.

# Angie Conners is Good Manager of the Month

Angie Conners, Manager of team C502 in Accounts Management is our “NTEU73 Good Manager of the Month” for June. Since the beginning of her time as manager, Angie has engaged with each and every person on her team on a personal level to make sure they feel

comfortable and at ease with the transition to their new job.

“I can only speak for myself, but coming to a new job where I knew nothing was a very scary transition for me,” said Ray Traft, a member of Angie’s team. “Angie made it so much easier for me by making sure all road bumps were smoothed over before we ever saw them.”

“Angie Conners has taken on the task of managing a team or new hires,” agreed team member Ed Winterberg. “She has been consistently helpful, organized and an excellent role model.”

“Angie has been amazing, not only has she touched me on a personal level but she has maintained a ‘by the book’ atmosphere making it so there was no room to stray off course or get lost along the way,” Mr. Traft added. “She is very forthcoming about any type of review or feedback that we need on a regular basis. I know as a manager it is easy when things are going well to let things continue down that path. But with Angie, if things are going well she makes sure each and every one of us know that it is and that we are doing well. On the flip side if I am not achieving the

goals she knows I am capable of, she has provided me with constructive feedback on what can be done to improve and making it a positive so that I ‘want’ to get there for the team. She instills a sense of teamwork, pride and accomplishment in the small things that we do which helps me want to do this job and be here each and every day.”

The bottom line, according to several team members, is that Angie Conners has earned their respect, and as a result, she was nominated as the “NTEU73 Good Manager of the Month.” They wanted to let her know how much her team thinks of her so that she knows that a great job she is doing.

“Often, managers do not get the respect they deserve and I want this letter to serve as a testament to the things she has done for her team,” said Mr. Traft.

*NTEU73 wants to recognize the good managers of the IRS so that it encourages others to act in a like manner. If you would like to nominate your manager as the NTEU73 Good Manager of the Month, simply send us an email or give us a call at 859-669-5370. Please include as much information as you can as to why your manager should be the Good Manager of the Month! Send to [jeffrey.e.seibert@irs.gov](mailto:jeffrey.e.seibert@irs.gov).*



Angie Conners

## NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

### Day Shift:

**4th Street** - Tommie Braswell, Ron Cunningham, Leann Gosser, Nicole Guethlein, Bill Lawrence, Shannon Lovins, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Jeff Seibert.

**GWC**—Ronnie Clemons, Sarah Corea, Tomeka Cottrell, Loretha Hudson, Bob Krekeler, Tanesha McCants, Quiana McCoy, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Nakia Reeves, Rick Riley (President), Melissa Rowland, John Selmeier, Toby Shields, Debbie Steiner, Rebekah Taylor, Karen Walsh (Vice President-Chief Steward).

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

### Night & Swing Shift

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

**GWC**—Alison Bower, Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Erin Cooper, John Gilliam, Shawana Oliver, Julie Orick, Dennis Stone, Michele Townsend.

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73**

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# Employee Proposed Terminations and Suspensions Are on the Upswing

Since the announcement of the closing of Submission Processing, there seems to be an uptick in the number of proposals to terminate employees for various issues, including tax issues, e-mail usage and other offenses. It has raised the question as to whether these actions are connected to the closing and whether IRS is trying to reduce the rolls of what they perceive as “bad employees” in preparation of the closing.

When an employee receives an adverse action, they are entitled to an oral reply, during which a union representative will typically lay out the employee’s version of what happened. Mitigating circumstances are highlighted, as well as comparisons to penalties given other similarly situated employees for similar offenses. The deciding official can eliminate, lower the penalty or sustain it. The union takes these cases very seriously as they are often the employee’s last line of defense, unless the case goes to arbitration. Arbitration is when attorneys for both IRS and NTEU argue the facts of the case before an independent arbitrator who decides on the merits of the case.

NTEU73 has assigned more experienced stewards to do oral replies. Since the closing, there have been many more oral replies scheduled than prior to the announcement.

But what are the offenses employees are committing to cause management to suspend or terminate them?

The two most prevalent are AWOL and tax compliance.

Tax compliance is a given. Everyone should know (as all employees are briefed on it annually) that as an IRS employee, you must pay your taxes timely and fully. Often times, employees make inadvertent mistakes on their returns, such as leaving out a W-2, etc. If it is not judged to be willful, and if it is a first offense, IRS generally puts a letter in the employee’s file, basically telling them of their obligations and warning them of more dire consequences for repeated offenses. These cases are automatic and if an employee does not properly comply with paying

their taxes, they can expect to be questioned about it by TIGTA.

AWOL is quite another matter. Lately, it seems management is coming down on employees for smaller and smaller amounts of AWOL.

One employee was recently suspended three days (after an original proposal of 14 days) for thirty-plus hours of AWOL. Yet, another employee who had hundreds of hours of AWOL was only suspended. The penalties are inconsistent and vary department to department.

While it seems like more and more cases are being initiated, it appears many may be warranted. Many of the AWOL cases include dozens of instances where an employee took time off without leave or failed to report to work.

It is quite possible that IRS is cleaning up their rolls. Many of the letters are proposing to remove employees from the service for “unavailability to report to work.” In many of these instances, employees have declined to come to work or to resign. IRS is likely simply removing them before the ramp-down.

In other instances, however, employees are being suspended or removed for actions they have taken over as many as ten years. In one removal letter, email incidents were cited that occurred as far back as 2007. That begs the question: why now?

Sometimes when investigating other allegations, IRS may come across behavior it deems inappropriate. And there is no statute of limitations.

“Our suggestion to employees is to keep your nose clean,” commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “In particular with taxes and AWOL. There is not a lot we can do about tax cases, other than mitigate the penalty occasionally. But with AWOL, they are all over the board. The easiest thing for them to document is when you don’t come to work. They may give you AWOL and let it go in the beginning. But if it continues, they will do something about it. If enough AWOL is used, it can, and probably will, result in a suspension and it could lead to termination.”

Also, several cases involve the misuse of government equipment. Employees should remember that everything you do on an IRS computer is there forever. Be careful about what web sites you pull up and, of course, never access taxpayer accounts without a business purpose.

If you do get into trouble., NTEU is here to help. If you get a letter or admonishment or suspension or termination, come to the union office; don’t just take the penalty. Often, we can get the penalty reduced or even, occasionally, eliminated. And never lie to

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**On Facebook: Official NTEU Chapter 73**

## 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).

# 2017 NTEU73 Picnic Photos



## 60 Second Updates

### FY17 Funding Set; Next Up is FY18

Now that Congress has cleared an omnibus bill putting in place funding for the remainder of this fiscal year, attention is turning to fiscal year 2018. The administration is expected to release a full funding proposal later this month. Earlier in the year, the White House released a so-called “skinny budget proposal” for FY18. A priority issue for NTEU is reversing the budget cuts that have left agencies and employees hobbled in attempting to fulfill their missions. The funding proposal may contain language on a federal employee pay increase for 2018. Indications are that the president may propose a 1.9 percent pay raise. NTEU believes that is not enough given years of little or no increases. The union is supporting legislation in the House and Senate to provide a 3.2 percent increase.



### Spending Deal Sets IRS Priorities

The omnibus appropriations bill passed Thursday by Congress includes a number of priorities and directives for the Internal Revenue Service. National President Tony Reardon stated, “This is not a sustainable budget situation for the agency that is responsible for bringing in 93 percent of the money needed to fund the entire government.”

### Pay Raise Proposed

The administration is expected to include a 1.9 percent pay increase for federal employees in its 2018 budget proposal due this month.

NTEU rejects that figure as too small. An increase of only 1.9 percent would not be enough to help federal employees make up for years of nearly stagnant wages while costs continue to rise and private-sector wages have gone up. The union supports House and Senate legislation providing employees with a 3.2 percent pay raise for 2018. That would help federal wages get back on track.

NTEU last year also argued that the 1.6 percent pay raise presented by the previous administration was too low, and the union

was instrumental in getting it increased to 2.1 percent.

### Public Employee Loan Program Targeted

The administration’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2018 calls for the elimination of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which erases certain student loan debt for federal employees – and other public servants – after 10 years of making monthly payments.

NTEU opposes this and National President Tony Reardon immediately wrote to the Education Secretary about the benefits for the government and its employees.

“In our union, we have many lawyers and scientists who could make two or three times more money working in the private sector,” Reardon wrote to Secretary Betsy DeVos. “But they believe that being a civil servant is a calling, and they feel fortunate to be able to work in the government, with lower pay, knowing that, at some point in the future, their student loans will be paid off.”

## 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**
- ◆ Secretary **Tanesha McCants**
- ◆ Stewards **Sarah Corea** and **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Night Shift Chief Steward **Julie Orick**

### Fourth Street Center (Flat Top):

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

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

**Ron Cunningham** won an oral reply and got a penalty reduced to an admonishment. He is working on a UNAX case and he got an employee a resignation rather than a termination.

**LeAnn Gosser** helped an employee get credit hours and handled two AWOL cases.

**Nicole Guethlein** got an employee’s evaluation raised to all 5’s! She also got 80 hours of sick leave approved for an employee, and helped correct an SCD for an employee.

**Bill Lawrence** is working on a case involving AWOL and FMLA issues. He also stopped harassment of an employee for going to the restroom.

**Laura Mitchell** got over-time hours for an employee when they were reported differently by management.

**Michelle Robinson-Cunningham** dealt with a bullying issue. She also got a counseling letter removed from an employee’s file and helped another employee with a tax compliance issue.

**Jeff Seibert** handled an AWOL case for an employee who had originally had been granted LWOP

# TEPAC Supports Legislative Action for Federal Employees

TEPAC is the political action committee run by NTEU to support federal employee issues with Congress. Employees can donate to the PAC and it is totally voluntary.

It is just one of the many things NTEU does for employees at the national level and in the nation's capitol. Funds from the PAC are used to back candidates who are friendly to federal employee issues.

In addition, NTEU National has an entire staff dedicated to lobbying Congress on behalf of federal workers. In this time of budget cutting and threats to retirement, NTEU is on the job trying to limit damage and promote positive initiatives with Congress for federal workers.

TEPAC is not something a lot of

employees know about. NTEU is not permitted by law to solicit contributions on federal property and on government time. NTEU National Office sends mailers for

only criteria NTEU uses is whether or not a candidate is friendly to federal workers and their issues. It does not depend on party affiliation. Debbie Mullikin is the

Legislative Coordinator for NTEU73 and serves on the National NTEU Legislative Committee as well.

NTEU73 has been act in legislative grass roots efforts, visiting Congressmen and Senators in their local offices as well as at their offices in Washington.

NTEU73 hand delivered hundreds of letters over the

past year to local representatives about the closing of SP, federal pay and benefits and other issues. This year, NTEU73 won a Power Award for excellence in legislative action from National NTEU.



**Benefactor donors to TEPAC are pictured here with National President Tony Reardon in Las Vegas. That's NTEU73's own Debbie Mullikin , 3rd from left in the front row!**

TEPAC to members at their homes and many have chosen to help with contributions. Last year, the union raised over a million dollars which was donated to various campaigns across the country. The

## Green for Signing Up for NTEU!

The Summer Membership Campaign is Back!

If you sign up for NTEU between May 1-September 30  
You get \$50 and whoever recruits you gets \$25!!



With all that NTEU is doing for you,  
this is a deal you cannot pass up! Sign Up Today!  
Just stop by any union office to get your form and \$50!



**UNITED**  
B E N E F I T S

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**The National Treasury Employees Union**

**In These Troubled Times, United Benefits  
can be a BIG Benefit to YOU!**



**United Benefits will be in the Service Center throughout the coming months to help employees get a firm understanding of what faces them as they prepare for retirement. Their staff professionals, fully endorsed by NTEU, are experts on VERA/VSIP, the Thrift Savings Plan, the GRB Platform, your Health Insurance and all the paperwork involved. They can also take care of all your insurance needs, including disability, cancer, accident and life insurance!**

**They are here to help YOU!**

**Call today to set up an appointment with a United Benefits Representative to get your future in order!**

**Call Roxy to set up your time to chat:  
423-309-2758**