

NTEU 73 Takes a Trip to Capitol Hill to Push Employee's Issues

NTEU73 went to Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress on your behalf. Those of us who went used earned leave for these activities per the Hatch Act. Our visits were normally with Legislative Aides of the Congress Folk. However, The Honorable Thomas Massie took time out of his schedule to meet with us and hear our concerns regarding pay, benefits, the federal employee sin tax, a fair and equitable workplace, agency missions and shutdowns. We appreciate his time. He listened and responded with informed answers. His voting record on issues important to NTEU members is 33%. Not as high as we would like but much better than some of the others in our area. What is a federal employee sin tax? Congress has raised the cost of federal retirement for new hires from 0.8% to 5% and wants to increase that cost again, as well as bring the existing employees' cost up "to be consistent." This increase in cost is not due to an underfunded retirement system. FERS is fully funded. It is considered a model Retirement System by a diverse group of retirement experts. This increase in cost does not correlate

to an increase in benefit, either. The new hires spending more will not receive better benefits than the folks who have worked here for 10 years. The increase (a.k.a. "cost savings") will be used to enhance the general fund. otherwise known as the "petty cash" for Congress. It may be spent on any pork barrel project they deem appropriate. Normally, sin taxes are used to pay for the harm caused by the sin one has committed such as the taxes on cigarettes which were supposed to be used for health care. The gas tax supposed to be used for highways, etc. This particular tax is on patriotic individuals who choose to serve the American people. It is assessed on soldiers, doctors at the VA, Border Patrol Agents and mail clerks, alike. The current median FERS pension is approximately \$1100 per month. That won't change but our take home pay will be decreased as much as 6%. That's the thing we will notice first. The next problem we will notice is moving from high 3 to high 5. You get a higher grade and think; "I only have to work 3 years to make this my retirement." But NO! now you are working 5. So you work

the 5 years finally get to retirement only to find out they have eliminated Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and \$1100 is all you are ever going to get. By the way, the money you safely invested in the G fund gets half the interest it did when you started that investment because paying lower interest on your investment is also a "cost savings" for Congress. Lastly, our elected leaders are considering eliminating the defined benefit pension part of FERS. The median defined benefit is ... \$1100. We are then dependent on our TSP (remember they want to cut the interest they pay on this investment in half) and Social Security, if it continues to exist. We can all take action regarding these issues. Please use www.NTEU.org to email your representatives regarding these and other issues important to Federal Employees, you don't have to be a member or even log in to use the Take Action part of the website. Don't do this on government equipment or time.

United We Bargain, Divided We Beg!

Debbie Mullikin



Inside this Issue:

- * NTEU73 on Capitol Hill.....1
- * From The Presidents Desk....2
- * Black History Month.....3
- * President's Proposed Budget.4
- * Officer Elections.....4
- * NTEU73 Stewards.....5
- * Cincinnati Zoo Member Discount.....5

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A Chapter 73
Publication

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**From the Desk of NTEU73
President
Rick Riley .**

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



The Problem with Morale is...

What are the issues affecting morale here at the Cincinnati Service Center? As you can imagine, with all the chains of management the issue is different in every area, and sometimes it just comes down to how the unit manager is treating their employees. Some employees have issues at home that are impacting their lives and that could mean issues at work as the employee may need leave to deal with those issues.

Karen Walsh, the Chapter Vice President and I met with Jim Clifford, Director of Customer Accounts Services. We only had 30 minutes so we took in the 4 pressing issues. First, we talked about the joint effort made to help employees in Processing. The Core Room was a joint effort between Chapter 73 and management. The Chapter dedicated a lot of resources to it ensuring the employees were helped. The Consolidating Committee who over saw so many of the activities surrounding the shut-down did a fantastic job. I had started the activities as soon as possible and when Jim Fish arrived and named Dean Curry in charge for him, things took off. Karen Walsh, wanted this committee, she worked extremely hard to make sure that what was being delivered was a great product, and great effort. We knew there were going to be issues, for some reason management didn't believe us

when we said 400 people were going to retire. I also anticipated that jobs would be announced in early October, and they were. NTEU encouraged people to be prepared, but as human nature has it, many pushed off getting ready until the open window. Thus, a crisis that the Consolidation Team did a great job with.

You can imagine the pride I had when the Consolidation Team won Employee of the Year. For the first time in history, Chapter 73 had two members on a team that won! They did a wonderful job and Chapter 73, should be proud of their accomplishments.

So, in Processing, with it closing, there are several issues that are stressing employees and affecting Morale. With staffing levels down, the pressure to finish cycle dates is more each day. The same can be said in Compliance. Compliance has not hired in years. Now, there is an ACS Call Site and jobs there, but that doesn't address the other areas in Compliance that are still short. In Compliance, there is a need for over 400 employees to fill vacancies and more jobs are coming. Several of the vacancies will be filled from within, but there will be several filled from the outside. However, again, this process will be stressful for all involved, including management.

We addressed the Morale Problem in Accounts Management.

We gave several examples of how management was using the Aspect System as a time clock. The nit picking in reviews by management and the utter disrespect shown by some managers to their employees. There are managers who spend their days looking for an employee to mess up, even if it is so very small and has no impact on the customer or the account. We told Mr. Clifford about all this and he was not happy to hear it. We told him that local management's reply to their morale problem was the issues employees were facing at home. Mr. Clifford was not pleased with that reply. Morale can be affected by many things, it is up to leadership to recognize and address the issues, even if they are personal issues and employee is having. The old saying in the military is you can tell how happy the troops are by what they are complaining about. Well, sitting here and listening to employees complain, it isn't their home lives, it is how they are treated. Karen and I will continue to address this issue at every meeting with management, and employees.

NTEU
The National Treasury Employees Union

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

28 PRICELESS CONTRIBUTIONS

4 HENRIETTA LACKS
Rapid reproducing cells (HeLa) have contributed to groundbreaking medical research.



5 GARRETT AUGUSTUS MORGAN
The roads would be chaos without his traffic lights.



6 RUBY BRIDGES
One of the first black children to courageously integrate into an all-white elementary school.



7 FREDERICK JONES
Created the refrigerated truck, revolutionizing how we preserve and transport food.



1 JAN ERNST MATZELIGER
Shoes are easier to come by thanks to his fast-producing lasting machine.



2 PHILIP DOWNING
Invented the street letter box and railroad switches, inspiring others to create today's mailbox and light switches for homes.



3 MARSHA P. JOHNSON
Pioneer during the Civil Rights Movement and activist for the black transgender community.



11 JAMES BALDWIN
Gay novelist whose writings and speeches gave voice to the black LGBTQ+ community in the 1960s.



12 NAACP
Founded on this day in 1909, the NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization.



13 THE 'LITTLE ROCK NINE'
Some of the first black teenagers to bravely integrate an all-white high school.



14 LLOYD AUGUSTUS HALL
Chemist amassed more than 59 patents in the science of food preservation.



15 ALICE H. PARKER
Thanks for keeping us warm with your gas furnace heating system, the predecessor of central heating units.



16 ALICE BALL
Initiated research into the cure for Hansen disease, known as leprosy. Treatment is named the 'Ball Method.'



17 MARY KENNER
Created the first sanitary rapkin belt design.



18 LEWIS LATIMER
Perfected Alexander Graham Bell's light bulb by replacing the paper filament with a long-burning carbon one.



19 MARIE VAN BRITTAN BROWN
Thank you, Mrs. Brown for keeping our homes safe with the creation of the first home security system in 1906.



20 EMMETT CHAPPELLE
Scientific discoveries led to safe food supplies for astronauts.



21 SHIRLEY JACKSON
Scientific research led to the creation of telecommunications products, such as fiber optic cables and the touch-tone telephone.



22 DR. CHARLES DREW
Created the process to preserve blood plasma, which led to the first large-scale blood bank.



23 BENJAMIN BRADLEY
"Full steam ahead!" would be impossible to do without his engine that powered the first steam-powered warship.



24 ARMY SGT. ADOLPHUS SAMMS
It would not have been "one small step for man" on the moon without his various engineering contributions.



25 PERCY LAVON JULIAN
Research into groundbreaking chemical synthesis in plants helped pave the way for birth control pills and cortisone.



26 TARANA BURKE
Founder of the Me Too movement, giving voice to girls and women who are victims of sexual harassment and assault.



27 PETER WILLIAMS JR.
Co-founder of black media publications, giving voice to people once denied access to literacy.



28 FANNIE LOU HAMER
Her 1964 DNC speech was used by activists to pressure politicians into passing the Voting Rights Act in 1965.



NTEU@80
PROTECTING FEDERAL WORKPLACES SINCE 1938

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This Black History Month, NTEU is honored to celebrate African American heritage and culture by taking a closer look at their 'priceless contributions' throughout American history. From words of inspiration and political activism for civil rights to groundbreaking inventions, African Americans have completely transformed the way that we live — for the better — the past several centuries.

This February, we are casting a light on African American culture and heritage. Throughout NTEU's 80-year history, we have valued and will continue to value the positive influence that our members of the African diaspora and their ideas have on the strength of our union.

Black history is American history; and NTEU is proud to celebrate those who have fought to make the world a better place with their intellect, courage and perseverance. Visit www.nteu.org/BlackHistory for more information.

Tony
Tony Reardon
NTEU National president

President's Proposed Budget Threatens Integrity of Civil Service

The administration unveiled its fiscal year 2019 budget yesterday with familiar language that proposes devastating cuts to the pay and benefits of federal employees.

The lengthy list undermines a strong civil service: blocking an across the board pay raise in calendar year 2019, reducing paychecks by forcing employees to contribute more toward their retirements, lowering pensions, diminishing the government's share toward health insurance, reducing sick and annual leave, weakening due process protections and cutting worker compensation benefits.

According to the Department of Labor's Employment Cost Index, private industry wages have increased an average 10.4 percent over the last five years, while federal employees have risen only 6.9 percent over the same time. Blocking a modest pay adjustment in 2019 would make federal employees fall further behind their private-sector counterparts and damage our government's ability to recruit and retain skilled workers. NTEU strongly supports legislation giving federal workers a 3 percent adjustment next year.

"Federal employees are not Washington insiders. They live in every state and U.S. territory— just trying to earn a living, pay their bills and save for their senior years," said National President Tony Reardon. "Pay freezes only chase the best and brightest workers to the private sector, where many of them can earn significantly higher salaries and avoid the demoralizing attacks from elected officials." Congress Reaches Two-Year Bipartisan Spending Deal After a brief, disruptive shutdown in the early hours Friday, Congress reached a spending agreement—the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (H.R. 1892)—that may end monthly continuing resolutions (CR) that have been a common occurrence this fiscal year. Congress also enacted legislation (H.R. 1301) to ensure back pay for employees

furloughed during the short shutdown.

While the spending measure includes a short-term CR through March 23, it also includes NTEU-supported increased spending relief from sequestration for non-defense agencies through the end of FY19. NTEU is pleased the agreement includes funding for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which helps recruit and retain highly skilled employees.

"Congress can now get to work properly funding agencies for the remainder of the fiscal year and the next," said National President Tony Reardon.

The focus is now on urging Congress to pass appropriations bills within the next six weeks that ensure agencies have the necessary tools and adequate staffing.

The IRS still needs additional funding to handle the expanded workload and technology upgrades necessary for implementing the tax bill. The administration requested \$90 million of the agency's \$397 million cost estimate to implement the new tax law, but it was not included in this measure.



NTEU Officer Election 2018

The "Notice for Nomination and Election of Chapter Officers" was mailed out to voting-eligible members on February 5th. Per that notice, Chapter 73 will hold an electronic/telephonic secret ballot election beginning on March 30, 2018, and ending on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. EST for the following offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board Director (5 positions).

If you have any questions concerning the upcoming election, please contact Sarah Corea, Election Committee Chairperson, at nteu73election2018@hotmail.com.



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 throughout Cincinnati IRS center locations Here is a list of stewards currently in NTEU offices:

Gateway:

Chapter President **Rick Riley**
Vice President **Karen Walsh**
Chief Steward **Debbie Mullikin**
Office Staff/Stewards **Sarah Coreia, Tonya Morris**
and **Chris Pierce**
Swing Chief Steward **Dennis Stone**

Fourth Street Center:

Steward **Shannon Lovins**
Steward **Hillary Montgomery**
Treasurer **Bill Lawrence**

Florence:

Stewards **Janet Colwell and Robyn Johnson**

Michele Townsend Is working on a grievance to have an employee's Annual Evaluation raised.

Sarah Coreia was able to get an employee's AWOL changed to LWOP. She also had an employee's removal changed to a 3 day suspension.

Nicole Guethlein signed up 11 new members. She also helped 2 employees with FMLA.

Jennifer Smith represented an employee In an Oral Reply for removal for approved leave. Informally had an employee's pay corrected.

Debbie Mullikin won an Appraisal Grievance. Had a 5 day suspension lowered to a 2 day suspension. Had 2 employee's pay corrected, informally.

Tonya Morris informally had AWOL changed to LWOP. Helped an employee get their tour of duty changed.



CINCINNATI ZOO & Botanical Garden

Order your discount tickets online and save anytime during the year!

The advertisement features three photographs of animals: a hippopotamus on the left, a rhinoceros in the center, and a gorilla on the right. The background is a vibrant green with a white border.

Purchase your discounted Cincinnati Zoo tickets today! We're open for 364 days of fun! Stop by The Union office and we will sign you up for the member discount.

