

# The Force

*United We Bargain, Divided We Beg!*

**A Publication of NTEU Chapter 73**

Outside Employment

Outside Employment (OE) is employment or business activities that are performed separate from your IRS duties or position. IRS employees may engage in outside employment if doing so would not pose a conflict of interest with your duties and responsibilities as an IRS employee, and if you have received prior approval from management to engage in that business activity.

If you would like to request approval of an outside employment, you will need to submit a request under *Article 6* of the contract. If your request complies with the rules, you may participate in permitted OE activities if such activities are performed outside your IRS hours or in a pre-approved leave status. Once you decide to have OE, you will need to submit the request at least ten (10) workdays before accepting or starting a permitted Outside Employment position. You will need to add your request to the Outside Employment System in HR Connect.

There are some outside activities that are not permitted that you are going to want to steer clear of. IRS employees may not participate in activities concerning: (1) the performing of legal services involving Federal, State, and local tax matters; (2) appearing on behalf of any taxpayer before any Federal, State, or local governmental agency in an action involving a tax matter (except with the written authorization of the Commissioner), (3) engaging in accounting or bookkeeping, (4) preparing tax returns for compensation, gifts, or favor, and representing another before any agency or court in connection with a matter in which the United States is a party or has a direct and substantial interest in the matter, unless permitted by an exception found in *18 U.S.C. Section 205*. Before taking on outside employment, please be sure to speak with your manager or read the Ethics handbook.

**NTEU73**

## APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS AND WHAT DO MAY FLOWERS BRING? SPRING!!!

It's that time of year again where those pesky allergies start to affect us all. High tree and grass pollen counts, mold spores flying everywhere! If you've lived in the tri-state area for any length of time, you already know it's coming. So, start safeguarding now! Make sure your preferred antihistamines are stocked up, go get that nasal spray or those eye drops. Don't get caught off guard. Prevent the springtime allergies making you sick now, so when summer finally rolls around, you have your leave hours for vacations or that much needed mental health day. Plan for the worst to save your leave for the best!

**Brandi Riggs**

SPRING FLOWERS

**Schedule F = Schedule Fire**

[nteu.org/schedulef](http://nteu.org/schedulef)



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# NTEU Working 4U!

**Jacob Bross** - Got 24 hours of AWOL removed.

**Diane Gallina** - Got a 14 day suspension taken down to a letter reprimand for a UNAX violation.

**Shannon Lovins** - Got a employee reinstated and admin time for the time they were improperly removed.

**Angela Moore** - Got a removal dropped to a 10 day suspension.



To All NTEU73 Members,

The deadline for nominees to accept nominations was March 15, 2024. The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and all five Board candidates were unopposed. The term of office begins April 17, 2024 and will end April 20, 2027.

Those elected and their positions are as follows:

- President ~ Shannon Lovins
- Vice President ~ Alex Walker
- Secretary ~ Angela Moore
- Treasurer ~ Janet Colwell
- Board ~ Diane Gallina
- Board ~ Loretha Hudson
- Board ~ Rachel Lovins
- Board ~ Tonya Morris
- Board ~ Brandi Riggs

We thank them for their willingness to serve to make our Chapter a more effective organization, to serve the interests of our members, and to continue the successes that we have secured in the past.

**Debbie Mullikin**

## NTEU Chapter 73

**- Gateway -**

859-320-3617

**- Annex Kentucky Drive -**

859-869-5293

**- Facebook -**

[www.facebook.com/nteu73](http://www.facebook.com/nteu73)

**- Chapter Web Site -**

[www.nteu73.org](http://www.nteu73.org)

**- Twitter -**

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

**- Email -**

[ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington](mailto:ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington@irs.gov)

[@irs.gov](mailto:@irs.gov)



## Stewards Corner

**President:** Shannon Lovins

**Vice President:** Alex Walker

**Secretary:** Angela Moore

**Treasurer:** Janet Colwell

**Day Shift Stewards:** Brandy Belew, Jacob Bross, Shonda Collins, Diane Gallina, Amanda Gerding, Nicole Guethlien, Rasheda Harris-Bates, Loretha Hudson, Suzanne Jackson, Rachel Lovins, Tonya Morris, Brandi Riggs, Kendra Stevenson, Luke Terhaar

**Swing Shift Stewards:** Maureen Cruse, Erinn Sweeney

### NTEU73 Events

**- Memorial Day @ Stickers Grove -**

May 25th, 2024

**- Labor Recognition Week -**

September 16th - 20th 2024

**- NTEU Toy Drive -**

November 1st, 2024 - December 1st, 2024

**- NTEU Holiday Party -**

December 14th, 2024

“Right to Work” laws. It sounds good, doesn’t it? It sounds like a policy to protect working-class people and their “right” to have a job. Well, it just so happens that your “right to work” has actually never been in jeopardy. What these laws actually do in states where they are passed is allow workers to leave the union that has been organized under their employer and pay no dues while still reaping the higher wages and better benefits the union has negotiated for them. This creates what’s called “free-riding”.

The dues that come out of a union worker's check, which are usually around 1% of your pay, fund the union’s negotiation power and competency. Ironically, they fund the enforcement and creation of your rights as a worker. The lawyers that negotiate your contract are not cheap. Since the 1960s, the National Right to Work Foundation has made it its mission to weaken the influence employees have in negotiating their own rights. They’re doing a pretty decent job too. Twenty-six states have enacted some form of right to work law, and the data shows that those states have lower wages and worse benefits than those without them.

The NRTW Foundation’s biggest donors head some of our nation's largest and wealthiest corporations and have a lot to gain from eroding fair labor practices in America. The Koch brothers and the Walton family (Walmart), to name a few. RTW laws do not protect you; they protect these corporations right for profitability to grow exponentially while the wages of their employees grow at a snail's pace, if at all. On average, workers in RTW states are paid 3.2% less than similarly situated workers in non-RTW states. While the average due is only 1% of a paycheck, this translates to \$1,670 less per year for the average full-time worker.

The long-term effects on workers due to free-riding and weakened union effectiveness can include:

1. Lower wages: With reduced bargaining power, unions may struggle to negotiate fair wage increases, leading to stagnant or lower wages.
2. Reduced benefits: Employers may cut benefits, such as healthcare or retirement plans, as unions lose their ability to negotiate and enforce these benefits.
3. Poorer working conditions: Weakened unions may be unable to advocate for improved working conditions, leading to unsafe or unhealthy work environments.
4. Increased income inequality: As union influence wanes, the gap between top earners and workers may grow, perpetuating income inequality.
5. Decreased job security: With reduced ability to negotiate contracts and enforce protections, workers may face greater job insecurity.
6. Loss of voice and representation: Workers may feel disconnected from decision-making processes and lack a collective voice in the workplace.
7. Reduced training and professional development: As unions lose resources, they may be unable to provide training and professional development opportunities.
8. Increased workload and stress: Without strong unions to advocate for reasonable workloads, workers may face increased demands and stress.

These long-term effects can lead to a decline in workers' overall well-being, economic security, and ability to advocate for their rights.

Ohio is currently not a right-to-work state, but Kentucky is. This is just a small union paper, and I don’t have the space to go into as many details as I’d like. But the data and information is out there, and I encourage you all to do a little bit of research from sources that are not politically biased and pay attention to the ballots and candidates in your state.

**Jacob Bross**

### Article 13 Section 4 (9)

For all positions, applicants must complete an application as specified on the vacancy announcement in the automated hiring system. In order to complete this application, each applicant will receive a reasonable amount of administrative time and will be provided access to his or her OPF. In addition, employees may request up to **one (1) hour of administrative time each contract year to establish or update their resume on the automated application system.**

# Check out NTEU's online **GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM TOOLKIT**

- Sample letters to Congress on federal employee issues
- One-pager on using the Legislative Action Center
- Instructions for organizing legislative activities
- Tips for attending congressional meetings and townhalls

It's all available at [nteu.org/activism-toolkit](https://nteu.org/activism-toolkit)

## Got questions?

Contact NTEU's Director of Legislative Grassroots and Operations at [stacy.casimiro@nteu.org](mailto:stacy.casimiro@nteu.org).

*Reminder: This material should not be viewed or shared on government equipment or government time.*

**NTEU.org**



If you have recently changed your home address, email address, phone number, or name, please let the union know so that you can stay on top of NTEU73 news, updates, and information. The IRS does not share changes that you have made with NTEU. You must also tell us!

Please send any changes to Shannon Lovins / NTEU73 Membership: [Shannon.K.Lovins@irs.gov](mailto:Shannon.K.Lovins@irs.gov)

## NAME CHANGE REQUEST

**1. Your name MUST be changed in:**

- HR Connect
- Discovery Directory
- E-mail

(You must submit an ERC ticket for this to be changed)

**2. Fill out Form 13716 and turn it in to the badge room. (Mail Stop 622)**

**3. Once the name change request has been processed you will receive an e-mail stating you can schedule an appointment to come re-enroll. The e-mail will be from AWSS Smart ID. (It may go to your junk folder.)**

**4. Please read ALL of the instructions of this e-mail as it will give you details on what specific items you need to bring with you.**

**5. Members will still need to send the name change request to Shannon Lovins.**



## New Hire Incentive Payment

A pre-taxed payment of \$1,000 was authorized for qualified new hires in Accounts Management and Submission Processing for specific positions and locations. Employees will receive payments in two installments. Each installment will be for a payment of \$500 but will not arrive right away. Due to the process of eligibility screening and the processing of the Personnel Action Request, the incentive payments will arrive up to 60 days after the employee completes the 6- and 12-month service marks.

Eligible employees must:

- \* Be hired under DHA
- \* Be a new employee on or after April 1, 2022 (those previously employed by IRS within 90 days prior to the new job announcements aren't eligible)
- \* Sign the Recruitment Incentive Service Agreement,
- \* Remain an IRS employee for the length of the agreement
- \* Pass a misconduct screening and federal tax compliance check.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act requires the IRS conduct misconduct screenings. This act prohibits the IRS from paying any type of bonus, award or recognition to employees without a program in place that considers conduct and federal tax compliance. This screening protects the integrity of the Service.

**Shannon Lovins, President NTEU73**

## SUPPORTING TELEWORK

NTEU has a long history of helping agencies create and maintain successful telework programs and it is a staple in many of our agency contracts. These agencies, who had existing telework programs, were best able to quickly pivot to handle the remote work required during the pandemic while those who had resisted telework were unprepared. In fact, a May 2022 Survey by Eagle Hill Consulting showed that 46% of government employees who telework reported their team's performance improved since 2020. Comparatively, only 35% of government employees working in-person reported team performance improvements during the same period.

Telework is a win for everyone, not just for employees, but for management who can better compete with the private sector and recruit workers without losing productivity, for the environment, which benefits from reduced pollution from decreased commuting, and for taxpayers who save on federal building leasing costs. For example, the NTEU-represented U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (PTO) saves taxpayers over \$12.5 million every year due to reduced leasing made possible by telework/remote work. Based on the experience of the pandemic and expanded telework, the NTEU-represented Federal Communications Commission signed a new 15-year lease with a 30% reduction in space, resulting in a savings of \$119 million over the term of the lease. Government-wide, OPM has found that telework is currently saving the taxpayer approximately \$150 million per year.

In December 2023, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released a report that found that expanded telework and remote work enhances employee retention, recruitment, engagement and productivity. And in an August 2023 report, the Department of the Treasury found that open positions with Treasury that advertised a telework option had 20 times more applicants than positions that did not. Despite these clear benefits, last year, without any committee hearing or data review, the House passed H.R. 139, the SHOW UP Act, which would roll back telework programs and make it harder for employees to telework. NTEU strongly opposes this legislation.

NTEU National



### NTEU Urges:

- Opposition to legislation, such as the SHOW UP Act (HR 139/S. 1565) and riders in appropriations bills, that would roll back telework programs, adversely impact agency recruitment and retention efforts, and increase federal government leasing costs.
- Support for legislation to expand & protect telework.



## United Benefits Specialist's Ally & Chris

Chris and Ally are from Florence, Alabama, and their relationship dates back to their college days at the University of North Alabama, where they graduated together in December 2020.

*Exciting news - they are currently engaged and will be tying the knot this May 17th!*

At United Benefits, they work alongside the seasoned pros, Paul and Roxie Thornton who have been with us for years.

Since joining United Benefits, they have brought their skills and passion for helping others to our team, making a big impact on our mission to provide top-notch federal employee benefits and retirement services.

Outside of work, Chris and Ally are a dynamic duo. They are huge sports fans, especially when it comes to cheering on the Cincinnati Reds and hitting up sporting events together. They are also big music fans, always up for catching a live show, and they are constantly planning their next travel adventure, exploring new places whenever they can.

And of course, we can't overlook their furry and spoiled companion, Finny - she's the center of their world.

As part of the NTEU family, we encourage you to get to know Chris and Ally better. Give them a warm welcome, and don't hesitate to reach out to say hello!





**UNITED  
BENEFITS**

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# RETIREMENT COUNSELING AND BENEFITS ENROLLMENT

**IN-PERSON APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE**

Come by or set up an appointment for guidance on the following topics:

## RETIREMENT

- Assisting with Retirement Paperwork
- TSP & 401(k) Strategies
- Survivor Annuity Options
- Calculating Your Pension
- Social Security Strategy
- Early, Deferred, & Disability Retirement
- FERS Retirement
- FERS LEO Retirement

## SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

- Short-Term Disability
- Hospital Indemnity
- Critical Illness
- Dental & Vision Insurance
- Permanent Life Insurance for Employees & Family

## ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS



Schedule your free one-on-one benefits review by scanning the QR code or visiting us at

[unitedbenefits.com/christopherlee/](https://unitedbenefits.com/christopherlee/)

## YOUR LOCAL BENEFITS SPECIALISTS

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