

National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey Attends NTEU73 Fall Steward Training

NTEU National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey attended the annual Steward Training at the Holiday Inn in Covington on October 14. It was his first trip to Cincinnati since his election to the number two spot in the union at the NTEU National Convention in Hollywood, Florida in August.

Mr. Bailey addressed the stewards during the training, updating them on a variety of issues, including many national issues. He also discussed the tough negotiations for the National Agreement that took place with IRS negotiators in Washington.

"When they came to the table, they said three words," he said. "Budget, budget and budget."

Mr. Bailey said that the IRS wanted to roll back many of the provisions in the contract including employee awards. NTEU was successful in maintaining an awards

program for employees that is tied to awards given to managers. If manager's awards increase, so do employee's. If employee's awards decrease, so must

those to management.

Mr. Bailey said he started his career with NTEU as the Attorney Field Representative for Chapter 73. He has

worked for NTEU for over 30 years.

"It was a real honor having Jim at our training and I feel like I really got to know him," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley.

Mr. Bailey also attended an NTEU73 TEPAC reception at the Holiday Inn, intended to raise funds for the Chapter's legislative activities which cannot come from union dues.

"I am hoping to have Jim back as soon as he can," continued Mr. Riley. "I would also like to invite NTEU President Tony Reardon here.

We have to get with his schedulers to make that happen."



NTEU National VP Jim Bailey (center) flanked by (l to r) NTEU73 VP Karen Walsh, NTEU73 President Rick Riley, NTEU73 Secretary Julia Wiley and NTEU73 Treasurer Laura Mitchell.

New Benefit Hub Unveiled for Members

There is a new "Benefit Hub" at NTEU.org! NTEU members can log into the site and take advantage of the special deals on everything from Disney World to discounts at local restaurants.

By taking advantage of the discounts, union members could offset the cost of their union dues," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "It is just one more reason to join NTEU!"

This is a new thing that has begun recently. NTEU has always offered discounts to members on hotels, legal services, rental cars and many other things. Now it is easier to access and see what is available. And NTEU is adding more all the time.

Just got to NTEU.org and check it out! You will be glad you did!

Inside this Issue

- ◆ From the Chapter President's Desk..... 2
- ◆ Free Insurance..... 3
- ◆ Training.....4
- ◆ Chapter Meeting & Budget....5
- ◆ TEGE and RAIVES.....6



NTEU Chapter 73

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(859) 669-5370

Gateway Office Room 111

Monday—Friday,
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Facebook

Official NTEU Chapter 73
www.facebook.com/nteu73

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Twitter

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The Force

A Chapter 73 Publication

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From the Desk of NTEU73 President Rick Riley

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

We have hit the six month anniversary of taking office now and we have come a long, long way in making improvements to the operations of your Chapter. The Force is now a monthly publication focused on the issues here. The Executive Board has met twice and has also worked on and approved a new budget for the new fiscal year. With nine people on the Board, and each with their own ideas of what is important, there was a great deal of discussion, back and forth and compromising. The Executive Board voted for a Holiday Party. I pushed for a balance budget. I believe we, the Executive Board are responsible and charged with the fiscal security of our Chapter. Last year's budget was about \$35,000 in the red. I'm proud to say this year's budget shows that we may only be \$2,300.00 in the red and that is only if everything is spent. I am sure we will be able to keep the spending to our income level though as our Treasurer, Laura Mitchell constantly monitors the expenditures.

On the Operations side, we are resolving issues quickly with working cooperatively with our counter parts. The Stewards attended training the week of Columbus Day and were very pleased,

saying that was the best training we ever had. I would like to thank Karen for all her hard work putting it together.

When you have the likes of Jim Bailey, the Vice President of NTEU, Mike McAuley, National Counsel, and Will Igoe, our Field Representative leading the classes, you have a world of knowledge being delivered.

I'd like to thank our special guests, Jim Rogers, Field Director of Submission Processing and Special Agent Dan Carney of TIGTA. Both gentlemen were gracious and so helpful and informative. They helped make our training not only great, but interesting.

So after six months I'm feeling very good about how things are going for the Chapter. We are doing monthly meetings with employees from different departments and addressing the issues they are bringing to us. These meetings are so successful for just that, we are using the meetings to help employees by resolving their issues.

The stewards are winning grievances and resolving so many issues informally. Members are telling us they are very happy at how fast issues are resolved. If there is an issue in your area that we can help with, please contact the office!



NTEU73 Christmas Party Is December 5

NTEU73's Annual Christmas/Holiday Party has been scheduled for December 5 at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington.

The party will be from 6pm until 11pm and free tickets will admit one member and one guest. Only NTEU members can get tickets, one ticket per member. Tickets can be picked up from any union office.

There will be a free buffet and a cash bar. Door prizes will be given and there will be a disc jockey providing music.

"It is a very nice venue and will be a great event," said Thomascina Braswell, the NTEU73 Entertainment Coordinator. "We were lucky to get the Convention Center and I am sure it will be great,

being so close to the Service Center. We are hoping for a good crowd."

It will be recalled that several years ago, the Christmas/Holiday Party was held at the Convention Center. Recently it had been held in Ft. Mitchell.

"The party is a tradition that was started over decade ago, and we want to continue that tradition," commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "We know employees expect the best from this union and we plan to make it a first class event. This is a free event."

Thomascina Braswell and others are working to make this event come together. As soon as the tickets are available, notice will be given to employees.

Free Insurance for NTEU Members Only

NTEU members can get free Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance in the amount of \$1,000 free! It provides twenty-four hour, year round protection. All you have to do is sign up! It is provided at no cost as a service to your union!

The insurance is offered by Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company. The benefit is paid only if a claimant dies as the result of an accident, not when a natural death occurs. It also pays in full if a claimant loses both hands, both feet or both eyes. It pays half with the loss of one eye, foot or hand. Also, there are other stipulations in which the policy pays half or a fourth its value.

You name your beneficiary. If none are named, the money is paid to your

surviving spouse; if none, then to your surviving children; if none, to your parents. If no parents are surviving, it is then paid to your estate.

All members have to do is fill out a beneficiary form and sending it to NTEU National. To file a claim, you must simply request a claim form from NTEU Insurance Department, 1750 H Street NW, Washington, DC, 20006.

This is another service available to members only. Larger policies are available for purchase from Mutual of Omaha.

"As long as you are a member, you can keep this insurance in force," commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "I think every member should know about this insurance and take advantage of it. It's

free so the price is right!"

If a member wishes to sign up, contact any union office and get a Designation of Beneficiary Form to send in to NTEU National Office. It's as simple as that!

Take advantage of this free policy! You never know when something unexpected and tragic can happen!

Do You Have a Good Manager? Let NTEU73 Know!

Too many times the bad managers give all managers a bad name to employees. Most of the managers were common employees at one time in their career and have not forgotten what it is like to be a front line employee.

Many bad managers think they are doing a great job. They have adversarial relationship with those who work for them and they wear that as a badge of honor.

NTEU73 is looking for examples of good managers to hold up to the others and hopefully encourage good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior, although we will still do that when necessary.

If you have a good manager let us know! We are looking for managers who go above and beyond for their workers.

"I know in the past there have been article in **The Force** that berated managers by name," said Jeff Seibert, NTEU73 Director of Communications and Editor of **The Force**. "We are trying to take the opposite approach. I know there are many, many units out there that are happy with their managers and consider them friends. That is how it should be. Unfortunately, it is not like that everywhere. We want to

highlight some success stories and maybe some of the bad ones will get the hint."

"This idea was a brainchild of our Treasurer Laura Mitchell, and I think it is a good one," continued Mr. Seibert. "We want **The Force** to be not only an avenue of information but also an avenue for change."

"If you have a manager who you think should be recognized for his/her treatment of people or has done something good, please contact the union or me and let us know," Mr. Seibert continued. "We would like to feature them."

"Also, I would be interested in any feedback in general about The Force," he continued. "We are making it a much more local oriented publication and I try to include issues that matter most to people at our center. If there is anything you would like us to include that you think we should know about, drop me an email. Our goal is to make this the number one newsletter in the country again. We have won the award before and we want to win it again. It is a goal of Rick's and of mine. So please, let me know what is on your mind."

NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A. J. Allen, Dorothy Barry-Elliot, Tommie Braswell, Shane Chase, Ron Cunningham, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, Bryan Jackson, Jessica Jacobs, William Kohler, Daniel McNamara, Laura Mitchell, Michelle Robinson, Jeff Seibert.

GWC—Pat Breitenstein, Steve Clark, Tomeka Cottrell, Liz Herald, Vicki King, Bob Krekeler, Staci Lee, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (**President**), John Selmeier, Melinda Smith, Debbie Steiner, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (**Vice President-Chief Steward**), Virginia Watson, Julia Wiley (**Secretary**).

IRRC - Florence - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea, Michelle Hiles.

Swing Shift:

4th Street—Beverly Johnson, Stephanie Slayton, Crystal Taylor, Torika Thompson.

GWC—William Dreier, Ron DuMoulin, Jim Gregory, Terri Hampton, Marlo Hodge-Hammond, Julie Orick, Karen Payne, Robert Starks.

Receive Home E-Mails From Your NTEU73!

NTEU73 sends out regular e-mails to your home address upon request! You will receive local updates, electronic copies of all issues of **The Force**, Force Alerts, events and more! Just contact any union office and we will add you to the list. It's as simple as that!

Stewards Trained Locally to Serve Members

NTEU73 conducted their Annual Fall Training at the Holiday Inn in Covington, during which time stewards learned about everything from filing grievances and oral replies to employee benefits and disabilities.

The training was held for three full days, October 13-15. Among the guest speakers were Chicago NTEU Attorneys Mike McAuley and Will Igoe, the Harris Federal Law Firm in Louisville and Matt Whitten from United Benefits in Alabama. NTEU National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey also came from Washington. (See story on page one).

"We like to do local training in conjunction with the national training every year," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "Doing it here is far less expensive than going to training in another city. Plus we have better control of the curriculum so that our stewards get what they need."

The first day, local staff members, VP-Chief Steward Karen Walsh and Steward

Debbie Mullikin taught about grievances and oral replies.

On day two stewards were treated to a talk from NTEU Executive Vice President Jim Bailey, primarily about national issues.

An interesting presentation was given by

training started the third week of October to prepare for this new emphasis. Specific issues will be targeted and worked.

As the training wrapped up, President Rick Riley and Vice President Karen Walsh gave certificates of appreciation for the hard work stewards and staff members have been doing for the union. Every steward received a thank you from both officers.

"It was a very successful training and I would like to thank Karen and everyone who was involved for the hard work they put in to make it happen," said Mr. Riley. "I had a lot of great feedback from the stewards, many of them saying that it was even better than the national training in Las Vegas."

"I think it is vitally important that training be ongoing with the steward force so that they can effectively deal with employee's issues," Mr. Riley continued. "I am committed to giving them the necessary tools so that they can represent members the way they have come to expect."



Stewards attended NTEU73 Fall Steward Training at Holiday Inn in Covington. Stewards Karen Payne and Jim Gregory are in the foreground.

the Harris Federal Law Firm of Louisville regarding employee's filing disability claims. They explained the difference in "regular disability" and "occupational disability" where employees need only be partially disabled to and unable to perform a specific job to qualify. They are attorneys that handle these claims and will represent NTEU members at a discount.

"They are the best of the best when it comes to navigating employees through the disability process," said Mike McAuley, noting that they are one of only a couple firms in the country that specialize in Federal employee disability claims which differ from those of private sector workers.

On day three, NTEU Attorney Will Igoe went over a new way of doing business for NTEU73. Stewards are to be split into different areas and it is hoped, with get to know and better understand issues in those areas. The areas include, Florence, the Flat Top, Accounts Management in the Gateway Center and the other functions at Gateway. The thought is to specialize stewards.

Mr. Igoe came up with this idea and worked with NTEU73 President Rick Riley to develop the plan. Particularized



Bo Harris from Harris Federal Law Firm explains to Stewards about filing occupational disability claims.



National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey updates stewards on national issues.

Annual Business Chapter Meeting Held October 21

The Annual Business meeting of NTEU73 was held in the Gateway Center to a sparse turnout of both day and night shift employees. The fiscal year 2016 budget was announced and the attendees were given updates on the various Chapter activities.

Per the NTEU73 Bylaws, the Chapter has four meetings per year. The October meeting is the annual business meeting and is considered the most important of the year.

The budget, as voted on by the NTEU73 Executive Board was released. An abbreviated report is published here but members can get a more detailed report by requesting one from the union offices.

The Chapter currently has a surplus of \$171,804, money in the bank right now.

"We are trying to get to the point where the budget is balanced, but we have a large surplus so if we spend a bit more than we bring in, right now it is not that big of a deal," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "But I do not want to ever get to the point where we dip below one hundred thousand in the bank."

One of the discussions that took place during the budget process was whether or not the Chapter would continue having then annual Christmas Party.

"It is a big expense and, frankly, not that many people came," said Mr. Riley. "There was some discussion and at one point, it looked like we would not have one. But we continued to work it and now, we will have one. Thomascina Braswell is our entertainment chairperson and she did a great job helping to make it happen!"

"Folks have to keep in mind that this is just a budget," continued Mr. Riley. "We will not likely spend all the money we have allocated, but we can spend up to what we have set for each category without having to get further Executive Board approval. I am sure that we will spend far less in some of the categories."

NTEU73 is one of the richest chapters in NTEU because of the large number of members. Some

chapters across the country only have 100 members, etc. Because NTEU73 is a service center chapter, it brings in each year approximately \$90,000. But because there are so many members, the expenses are also greater. The annual picnic and the Christmas Party alone account for \$30,000 of expenditures. The Chapter has also budgeted \$20,000 for spring training of stewards at a national site.

"This is not a for-profit venture and it is alright to spend money as long as it for the betterment of the Chapter or for the members," said Mr. Riley. "Obviously, we are doing it responsibly."

The members at the meeting also received reports from the Chapter Secretary Julia Wiley, Treasurer Laura Mitchell as well as from President Rick Riley. Vice President Karen Walsh could not attend due to personal circumstances. The Chapter had CARTS in attendance to help the hearing impaired.

For the second time since taking office, the meeting was split into two parts, so that employees on day and night shifts could attend. This is a practice that will not be continued.

"It is something I wanted to try because we hear a lot of complaints from night shift that they are sometimes not included in everything," explained Mr. Riley. "But we have been having such a low turnout that it just makes more sense to go back to the old practice of having just one meeting. We have literally had only a handful of people come to the meetings."

"The meetings were well organized and went smoothly," said NTEU73 Treasurer Laura Mitchell. "We were glad to see a lot of new faces in attendance and it went very well. There was a lot of work preparing the budget and the reports, so I am glad that part is over for a while. We finally completed the Chapter audit. By looking at the reports, anyone can see that the Chapter is doing very well financially."

The next NTEU73 Chapter Meeting will be held in January.

FY 2016 NTEU73 Budget

(as passed by the Chapter Executive Board)

CHAPTER EXPENSES

Chapter Equipment Purchase	0
Arbitration	3,500
Chapter Meetings	500
Legislative Expenses	10,000
Legislative Conference	4,000
Labor Recognition	4,000
NTEU73 Picnic	15,000
Presidents Meeting	2,000
Promotional Items	0
Recruitment Payouts	4,000
Local Training	4,000
National Training	20,000
National Convention	0
National Negotiations	0
Storage Rental	2,268
Holiday Party	15,000
Membership Raffle Prizes	0
Membership Refreshments (Meet & Greets)	4,560
Refreshments	0
Travel	0
Chapter Newsletter (The Force)	0
Office Supplies Expense	2,000
Equipment Supplies	2,000
Utilities	3,000
Computer & Printer Operation	2,500
Professional Services	2,300

CHAPTER OPERATING INCOME

Member Dues	86,896
Picnic	158
Interest—Main Share	1
Interest—Super Saver	255
Savings Bond	8,506

CHAPTER NON-OPERATING INCOME

Gifts Received	3,000
From Surplus	5,295

TOTAL INCOME 101,111

TOTAL CURRENT SURPLUS 171,804

(For more detailed information, contact the union office)

**AWARD\$ ARE TO
BE PAID OUT
NOVEMBER 12
FOR FI\$CAL
YEAR 2015!**

TEGE Problems on NTEU73 Radar

Lois Lerner is gone; forced to resign over the national scandal that TEGE has become. But here in the Gateway Center, the problems that have been going on for too long have continued unabated.

NTEU and IRS are meeting nationally to resolve some TEGE issues, including, hopefully, getting some paper work for TEGE employees to do, rather than making them answer the phones virtually every day, 7.4 hours a day. Being in Accounts Management, TEGE is the worst of the worst. Not only is there practically no relief from the phone, but managers have historically and habitually treated employees with near contempt in their obsessive drive to “meet goal.”

Answering 94 out of a hundred calls exactly correct is unacceptable. Employees are ridden and harassed to meet the magic 95% figure, as if it matters. Ah, but that is “goal.”

One manager in TEGE has found a way to meet goal. She has simply “reviewed calls,” making them ineligible to be reviewed by quality (this from multiple reliable sources.) She does this to employee’s who seem to make more errors. Her team tends to lead TEGE in quality. Is this the kind of fraudulent behavior that should be condoned by the leaders of this organization, even if it does help them meet goal?

This same manager sends derogatory emails, lurks behind employees while they are on calls (unlike other managers) to try to catch them at something, habitually threatens AWOL for any perceived affront and generally makes life rough on all of her employees. She recently almost came to blows with another manager and the Department Manager reportedly had to step in to stop the argument. Talk about a hostile work environment! How long will this behavior be tolerated? What if a “common employee” acted in the same manner?

This manager no doubt views the way she treats employees as being a good manager. But she should check out the article in the new contract. It is about bullying. And make no mistake. That is exactly what is going on.

This manager is not the first and is not an indictment of all managers in TEGE. There are some good ones.

But there is an extraordinarily high rate of FMLA in TEGE. The imposed stress is uncalled for. There have been several managers in the area who could not answer the calls for which they give errors. They have never worked in the area. But they were not, apparently, put there to be experts on the subject matter. They are put there to ride the employees, pure and simple. One smart, young,

promising employee actually quit the IRS a while back because of the constant harassment. Most employees have been with IRS too long to simply quit, or many would. At a time when the most of the IRS workforce is getting older and ready for retirement, you would think IRS would cherish their younger employees. They clearly don’t in TEGE.

Employees are regularly berated and made to feel stupid when they have the audacity to commit an error. (As if the manager is perfect.)

Management continually ignores the Customer Service Agreement that the ASPECT phone system is not to be used to track employee time, complaining if the employees are off the phone for as little as three minutes.

This behavior must stop. Managers in the area need to treat their employees better.

Managers like to take the credit for high quality (in spite of, not because of managerial action) but do absolutely nothing to contribute.

TEGE has been put on the NTEU73 list of things to get done. Assistants there are among the worst treated employees in the service center.

Lois Lerner was not even fired. She was put on administrative leave (a free paid vacation) and then permitted to retire.

That’s unfortunately typical of TEGE.

Riley, Walsh Meet with RAIVES Employees:

At an October 20 “Meet & Greet” with RAIVES/IVES employees, the folks in attendance had lots to say. Members in that area had requested a meeting with NTEU73 President Rick Riley.

Among the problems articulated were issues involving the lack of update training, non-conversion of seasonal employees who have worked without being laid off for several years, employees not given the correct skill codes, managers intentionally ignoring the IRM and not getting any read time to familiar themselves with training.

Mr. Riley, along with Vice President Karen Walsh, heard their concerns and understood the urgency of the problems.

“I am going to set up a meeting with several RAIVES employees with their

Department Manager and the Assistant Director, hopefully, and let them explain the issues to management,” said Ms. Walsh. “In this way, the employees can have a hand in the resolution of some of these issues.”

Employees also complained about being given absolutely no “down time” and having to absorb that time into their production totals, which in turn, can lower their evaluations.

With the spirit of cooperation between SBSE management and the union, Mr. Riley is confident most of these issues can be resolved or improved.

“With the budget the way it is, it is difficult to add perm positions, but Mr. Rogers has already assured me he has requested they be added,” said Mr. Riley.

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

Visit nteu73.org.

**On Facebook:
Official NTEU
Chapter 73**

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 **Virginia Watson** and **Debbie Mullikin**

Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

- ◆ Stewards **Michelle Robinson**, **Tommie Braswell** and **Bev Johnson** (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.

A. J. Allen got an employee's evaluation raised from a 4.6 to a 5.0. He handled it informally.

Pat Breitenstein and **Virginia Watson** have been working on a case where some employees were furloughed improperly and are expecting a favorable resolution.

Jan Colwell got an employee's evaluation raised from a 4.4 to a 4.8! She also did her first Oral Reply. She has also been working RAIVES issues with **Shelley Hiles**.

Sara Corea worked her first case, and it was an oral reply.

Laura Mitchell got an employee moved to a better seat because she had issues with another employee.

Debbie Mullikin has signed up eight new members during the summer recruitment campaign. She also has handled oral replies for various issues.

Karen Payne got AWOL removed from an employee's file.

Jeff Seibert got 29 hours of AWOL removed from an employee's file.

Karen Walsh has been instrumental in getting several employee issues resolved including AWOL removed, evaluations raised and furlough issues.

60 Second Updates

OPM Breach

NTEU was briefed recently by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Acting Director Beth Cobert and was informed that notifications have begun for the approximately 21.5 million individuals affected by the background investigations breach announced in early June. Out of the 21.5 million individuals, 19.7 million are individuals that applied for a background investigation, and 1.8 million are primarily spouses or cohabitants of the applicants.

The union believes that it took far too long for the notifications to begin. For months, federal employees and their families endured a rollercoaster period of anxiety and vulnerability.

OPM will be notifying affected individuals via U.S. mail. The letter will have a return address from OPM and will



be signed by Acting OPM Director Beth Cobert. Please be aware that the 20 million plus notifications will be mailed out daily over a period of 12 weeks.

Health Fair to be Electronic!

The IRS has given NTEU courtesy notice that it will provide electronic health benefits information in lieu of onsite health fairs beginning in the fall of 2015.

Address Changes

It is important to note that NTEU is NOT informed when a member submits an address change to the IRS. Unless a member contacts the Chapter or uses the Personal Contact information area at www.nteu.org all mail from NTEU will continue to be sent to the old address! If you move, please make sure you update your address with NTEU!

Sequestration Leave Time Code

When you use your six hours of leave you received for sequestration, you should use time code 99-59569.

IRS Budget

NTEU National President Tony Reardon outlined some of the pressing issues facing NTEU members recently in a telephone briefing to members of the national media. Mr. Reardon underscored the need for Congress to quickly pass appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2016 and provide federal agencies with higher levels of funding as called for in the budget deal. Current federal funding expires by December 11. The NTEU leader also reminded reporters that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has been especially hit hard by budget cuts. Congress has cut IRS funding by almost \$1.2 billion in the past five years, nearly a 17% cut after adjusting for inflation.

Sign Up for Updates

NTEU73 Members can sign up and be updated as news happens. Like NTEU Official site on Facebook. Also, if you provide us with your email address you can receive important news directly to your inbox!!
