

## IRS Decision to Close Submission Processing Rocks the Flat Top

Employees were stunned at the sudden news that the IRS is going to close three Submission Processing Centers, including Cincinnati. Cincinnati is scheduled to close by the end of fiscal year 2019.

The news was kept top secret until IRS informed managers and NTEU National President Tony Reardon. The next morning, NTEU73 President Rick Riley was informed on a conference call with Mr.

Reardon and the presidents from the other affected sites about two hours before the employees were informed.

Since that time NTEU has been scrambling, both nationally and locally, in an effort to prevent the closure. NTEU73 has instituted a letter writing campaign to local Congressmen and Senators. The letter will be hand delivered to Washington. The chapter goal is to get 5,000 letter signed (*See related story on page 5*). Through labor recognition, a week after the announcement, NTEU73 already had gotten over 2,000 signed.

While the center is scheduled to be closed by 2019, many feel that employees will not have the full three years to make personal arrangements.

Over 1,700 jobs will be lost in Cincinnati alone. Of those people targeted, roughly 500 will simply retire. That will leave over 1,200 employees in need of a job. At this

point, there are still more questions than answers.

Mr. Reardon has asked the IRS for a briefing in order to get some answers.



**NTEU National President Tony Reardon discusses the IRS Shutdown with NTEU73 President Rick Riley during a recent visit to the Cincinnati Service Center.**

He informed chapter leaders in a meeting two days after the announcement that they would “not be alone in fighting this.”

“I do not want to talk about making this a soft landing for people,” Mr. Reardon said. “That is not where I am on this. I want to stop it!”

Employees who want up to

the minute information on this issue are encouraged to go to the [nteu73.org](http://nteu73.org) web site or check out the chapter’s “Official NTEU Chapter 73” Facebook page.

“This was a shock to everyone and I understand there are some angry and worried people out there,” said Mr. Riley. “I can only assure them that we as a chapter and as a union are going to do everything humanly possible to make sure we take care of our people.”

While the IRS has announced the shutdown, there has not been a formal Reduction in Force letter issued. That will likely come in about a year, if not earlier. NTEU will be talking to IRS on the national level in order to develop strategies to get as many people placed in other jobs as possible.

“We will be working closely with NTEU as we begin to look at specific details on this, but I want you to know that we plan

(Continued Pg. 3...Shutdown)

### Service Center Chapter Presidents Meeting to Be Held

The Service Center Chapter Presidents will be meeting October 4 in Annapolis, Maryland to discuss issues of importance for IRS Service Centers. NTEU73 President Rick Riley and National Vice President Debbie Mullikin will be attending the meeting from this chapter.

At the top of the list of issues will be the announced closure of three IRS Submission Processing Centers. National President Tony Reardon will brief the presidents on what he has learned about the closures.

Generally, the service center presidents get together twice a year to share information about issues they have in common. The last time they met was at the Legislative Conference in Washington in February.



### Inside this Issue

- ◆ From the Chapter President's Desk..... 2
- ◆ Manager of the Month.....3
- ◆ Another Telework Win.....4
- ◆ Young Blood.....5
- ◆ Homeland Security.....6
- ◆ Steward Spotlight.....7

## 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)

## ***The Force***

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## From the Desk of the President

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

September 14, 2016 will be remembered by Chapter 73 members and the other employees here at the Cincinnati Service Center forever and will live in infamy.

I'm sure you all know that the Submission Processing Center is Ramping Down and the lights will be turned off and the doors closed on September 30, 2019. That is a short 3 years away and we all have a lot to do.

I'm very proud of how my staff and stewards stepped up and went into action. If you haven't seen the list of what your Chapter is doing, please read it. I sent the *Force Alert* out to the other Chapter Presidents and they all have been very complimentary and impressed. I even received a reply from a Chapter President that said “With all you do for your members, the non-members should be ashamed.” I've received requests from other Chapter officers for my email titled “Lessons Learned So Far”. I learn more every day it seems and I'm in constant search of anything I can find out.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, I will be attending the Service Center Chapter President's meeting. As you can imagine, with 3 service

centers closing, this will be the number one issue. That same week I will be receiving a briefing from Ivy McChesney and Linda Brown.

Things you can do to help: make sure you sign the letters for the Congressmen and Senators, and get your friends, neighbors and family to sign them too. Make sure you go to [NTEU.org](http://NTEU.org) and sign the letters also, for all 3 service centers!

Our next steps will be partnering with management to give classes for USAJobs, Skillsoft, and resume writing. That is your next step! If you are in Submission Processing and you want to continue working here, you need to get another job. We need you to take these classes. It is important that you improve your skills to be more marketable. There are college classes online for accounting and many more. I recommend that for everyone working for the government, continue your education if you want to move up or move on.

I am working on several things right now, including a report that I will deliver to Congress. However, I alone cannot win this; I need all of you to participate, even if you aren't in Submission Processing. Who knows what evil lurks in the future, we must stop it here and now!



## Telework for ISO Processors and Excise

Added to the list of telework wins for NTEU73 was Innocent Spouse Processors who were awarded the opportunity to work from home in late September. This will affect five workers in Florence.

In addition, another Florence employee who is a financial specialist is also approved.

Then, in Excise in the Gateway Center, two Reports Analysts have been approved.

“We have made telework a priority and it has really been paying off,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “Debbie Mullikin has been doing a lot of work to push these through and it really has been snowballing. We are really waiting for our first win in Accounts Management. That will be huge!”

So far, Accounts Management has resisted telework, saying that the technology is not there. The union disputes that and is working to make it a reality for the people who make a living on the phones.

## 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).

# Labor Recognition Event is a Success

The 2016 Labor Recognition celebration is over and if the lines and attendance are any indication, it was again a raging success.

The union served hot dogs, brauts and metz to members and they were being cooked as fast as could be done to meet the demand. NTEU73 President Rick Riley and Attorney Will Igoe were present to answer employee questions about the shutdown and other issues.

There were also many vendors set up, including AAA, United Benefits, Dave & Busters, Western Southern, Fifth Third Bank and Cinfed.

The union was also getting letters signed by employees which will be hand delivered tom area congressmen about the recently announced shut down of Submission Processing.

This year, as last, Tommie Braswell headed up the effort and organized the event, including purchasing and the set up.

"I had a lot of help from Shannon Lovins,



Some of the stewards who helped during Labor Recognition: (L to R) Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Ron Cunningham, Karen Walsh, Shannon Lovins, Chris Pierce, Tommie Braswell, Loretha Hudson, Jim Gregory and Tanesha McCants.

Loretha Hudson and Tanesha McCants," said Ms. Braswell. "They were huge in getting this all done."

The union purchased a new commercial grill as well as several tents to shield

people from the sun. It was an extremely hot day, but that did not deter the crowd.

A side note: The closing of Submission Processing was announced the week before and meetings with employees had been scheduled during the Labor Recognition event. Mr. Riley requested the meetings be changed and management agreed with the request.

"It was ironic that during Labor Recognition, we receive news of the closing," said Mr. Riley. "I think many employees felt that they were not appreciated very much, especially by the higher ups that made a decision like that."

But all in all, it was a fun day and went very well.

"I would like to especially thank Julia Wiley for getting her family to help with this year's event," said Ms. Braswell.

"They were vitally important in getting things done. Her partner Tim drove the U-Haul and made sure everything was done! Thanks to Tim!"

## Shutdown...pg. 1.

to do everything we can to minimize the effect on employees, and we will work to help as many people as possible to transition into other positions at the IRS," said IRS Commissioner Koskinen in a memo to employees. "More details on this will be available in the months ahead, but I wanted to share this information with you as early as possible in the process."

"I want to stress that people need to help themselves through this," said Mr. Riley. "That means familiarizing themselves with USA Jobs, getting resumes ready and watching for job openings. IRS is not going to just move you into a job. You will have to put in for them."

Some employees have already asked about moving to Kansas City or Ogden, centers that will be doing the work Cincinnati has been doing.

"There may well be jobs that open up there but you will have to put in for them," explained Mr. Riley. "And you will not be given any moving expenses by the agency."

The chapter plans to hand deliver the thousands of letters it is collecting to the

area Congressmen and Senators and have a personal conversation with them about the closing.

"We are going to stress, not only the impact on the 1,723 employees here that are affected, but also all of the collateral damage, such as cleaning personnel,



guards, canteen workers and the like," said Mr. Riley. "That does not even count the local impact on area businesses and the loss of a huge tax base for the city. This is going to be a disaster for Covington. And we are getting them involved too."

Mr. Riley was interviewed by the *Washington Post* and appeared in an article on behalf of workers.

He also had a meeting with Linda Brown, the IRS head of Submission Processing, when she visited the campus September 29. The two agreed to partner over several issues including job fairs, educational opportunities for employees and making time more flexible so that employees can use computers to take college level classes. They also want to improve communications with seasonal employees and give them the ability to come in while they are in non-work status to take advantage of the opportunities.

The union is also trying to get access to all employee email addresses in Submission Processing to be able to better communicate with employees. Mr. Riley has said he will make space available in **The Force** if management wants to get the word out on various topics.

"I think we all want to make this as easy on people as we can, and I was very encouraged by my meeting with Linda Brown," Mr. Riley commented. "But in the end, people are going to have to do a lot to help themselves. We are looking at every avenue we can think of to improve the situation for employees."



# Ray Paganelli is NTEU73 Good Manager of the Month

Congratulations to Ray Paganelli on being nominated by his employees as manager of the month! Ray has been at the IRS for 10 years, all of it in RCO. He started as a mail clerk in Extracting in RCO on night shift.

In 2009 he got a job as a Remittance Perfection Technician. In 2010 Ray took a detail as a frontline manager in Extracting for the filing season. He got into the Frontline Managers Cadre in 2011 and 2013 and was given assignments in Extracting, Batching, Payment Perfection, TEGE, and Deposit. Finally, Ray became a permanent Manager in 2014 in the IDRS/ Payment Perfection Team.

Ray has a Daughter and a Dog (Max) that keeps him busy.

Some comments from Ray's team members:

"Ray Paganelli is one of those managers that everyone would like to have," said Opal Stewart, who works in his unit. "He is always willing to help anyone and

everyone in any unit. He has been a manager in 4 different departments and you never hear a bad word about him. He makes sure that all the work is flowing in all units here in Receipt and Control."



"Ray is the type of manager that can be very helpful to his employees," agreed Stephanie Schlachter? "He is always willing to lend a helping hand whenever it is needed."

"Ray is a very, very busy manager but he still finds time to deal with issues and listen to you," commented Sandy Kramer.

"Ray goes above and beyond to help each individual on the team," concurred Rob Schry. "He strives for excellence and demonstrates true leadership every day. It's a privilege to have Ray as a manager."

*If you would like to nominate your manager as the NTEU73 Good Manager of the Month, email Jeff Seibert or stop by the union office.*

## NTEU73 October Chapter Meeting

**When: Wednesday,  
Oct. 18 at 4:30 pm.**

**Where: Radisson Hotel,  
Covington KY**

**This is the Annual  
Business Meeting  
where the budget for  
2017 will be  
announced.**

**Come one!  
Come All!**



## RICS/IVO Win Telework: Employees to Work From Home

NTEU73 has gotten telework approved for yet another group of employees in RICS/IVO in the Gateway Center. It was another win for Debbie Mullikin, the steward that has become the point person for telework cases in the chapter.

In this case, six people put in for the telework. Deanna Jurczak was first and her case went through the grievance process and was about to go to arbitration. Management then settled with the union, prior to going to arbitration.

The end result is that a six month pilot has begun in RICS/IVO. At this time, the people included in the reconsideration are the only ones who

will be in the pilot program. At the four month mark, assuming all is going well,

Eventually, telework could be extended to others in RICS/IVO.

At first the employees will not be provided with laptops, but once they get a permanent telework assignment, they will be provided.

"It sometimes takes a while to get these things approved," said Ms. Mullikin. "But we were very pleased that this got done as quickly as it did. We started this process in July. It seems like the more of these we do, the smoother the process is becoming."

"The employees were very excited about being able to participate in the pilot," she added. "They will be working from home three days a week."



**The latest group of employees to win telework: (l to r) Steward Debbie Mullikin, Rene Neal, DeAnna Jurczak, Maria Varley, LeAnne Palmer, Shanda Hill, Connie Ogburn and Brittany Szmak.**

they will be able to apply for permanent telework.

# Union Infuses Young Blood Into Steward Force

With an eye on the future, NTEU73 President Rick Riley has been systematically looking for young people to fill the ranks of NTEU73 stewards.

"Within ten years, almost all of the leadership of NTEU73 will be retired," Mr. Riley said. "I am trying to get younger people involved and get them experience so that when the time comes we have a pool of people from which the chapter to draw new leaders."

"At least three full time staffers will be retiring in the next year," Mr. Riley explained. "Most of the people on my staff have been involved in the union for years and have a vast amount of knowledge. But we need to get more, younger people involved."

When people apply to be a steward, there is a process. Usually, they are interviewed by Vice President/Chief Steward Karen Walsh and Attorney and Chapter Advisor Will Igoe. After that they speak to the president.

"We are generally looking for the natural leaders in the work place," said

Mr. Riley. "And they need to be fully successful on their evaluations."

Over the last several months, NTEU73 had added about a dozen new stewards.

"It is nice to have stewards in different locations throughout the center, that way it keeps us informed about what is going on in the different areas," added Mr. Riley. "But if a person is right to be a steward, I will take from anywhere."

"A couple of the new stewards have really stepped up," said Mr. Riley. It is difficult to find really good stewards and when you do find them, they have to be developed. My staff and I are committed to helping get them the experience they need to eventually take over the Chapter.

If any employee is interested in being a steward, simply send an email to Rick Riley or Karen Walsh or stop by the union offices and you will be scheduled for an interview. The union especially needs to stewards in the Gateway Center, the Florence locations, and on swing/night shift.

## Union Sponsoring Important Letter Writing Campaign to Congress

NTEU73 is sponsoring a letter writing campaign to local Congressmen and Senators in an effort to enlist their support in an attempt to change the IRS decision to close Submission Processing in Covington.

Many employees have already signed letters during lunch and at Labor Recognition, but we need more.

"I would like to be able to take at least a couple thousand to each members," said Jeff Seibert, who is heading up the effort. "Right now we have maybe 2,000 total. We really to get a lot more of these done."

Employees are urged to sign letter to both of their senators and their congressmen. The letters are available in any union office.

"Not only do we need them signed by the employees, we need them signed by

any voter in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky," Mr. Seibert added. "It would be a huge help if employees could take them home and get their spouses and family members who can vote to sign them as well as anyone else. The more we can take to Congress, the more of an impression it will make."

The union plans to deliver the letters personally to the representatives and have a discussion about the problem.

"They need to understand that this not only affects the people losing their jobs at IRS, but also the city of Covington and the businesses here," added Mr. Seibert. "We will be in the cafeterias during lunches and would appreciate anyone helping to get this done. Sometimes I wonder how responsive our government leaders are. Well, this time we are going to find out."

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

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

**On Facebook:  
Official NTEU  
Chapter 73**

### **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, William Kohler, Krystal Lear, Shannon Lovins, Daniel McNamara, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Shawana Oliver, Lori Riedinger, Jeff Seibert.

**GWC**—Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Steve Clark, Jamie Coffman, 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), Virginia Watson, Julia Wiley (Secretary).

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

#### **Night Shift**

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

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

# Union Has Conversation With Homeland Security Chief

NTEU73 Officials met with Homeland Security Federal Protective Services Regional Director Mario Morales and a group of other Homeland Security officials on September 7 in Mahogany Hall at the Fourth Street Center. Mr. Morales had driven up from his home base in Atlanta to meet with NTEU73.

President Rick Riley, Vice President Karen Walsh, National Vice President Debbie Mullikin and Director of Communications Jeff Seibert met with the Homeland Security officials and both sides agreed that future communication would be established between the two organizations.

Mr. Morales maintained that Federal Protective Services (FPS) have a statutory right to issue tickets to IRS employees and that they are a completely separate law enforcement entity that is not answerable to the IRS or NTEU. However, Mr. Morales also seemed open to working with the union and, at least, improving communications.

While Homeland Security may have a

statutory right to issue tickets, NTEU73 President Rick Riley urged them to work with TIGTA in an effort to coordinate law



NTEU73 President Rick Riley and Vice President Karen Walsh pictured with Mario Morales (next to Rick) and other members of his Homeland Security team.

enforcement.

One example was given where an employee was interviewed by TIGTA, was told that it was not a criminal matter and that they would not be pursuing any action. However, after the fact, FPS issued

a ticket that the employee had to pay for a "criminal" offense of fraud.

Mr. Morales expressed the advantages for having FPS to provide a presence by citing the recent shooting in an Orlando nightclub. He said the perpetrator originally was going to attack a concert in Disney World but that because of a heavy police presence, he changed his target to the club, which had only one undercover officer.

"NTEU73 has no problem with Homeland Security having a presence on the campus and keeping us safe," said Mr. Riley. "That is their job and it is a hard one. I really appreciate them making the effort to meet with us. We just do not like the practice of issuing expensive tickets to low grade employees who have difficulty paying them."

While Mr. Morales would not commit to a lessening of ticket writing, no tickets have been issued of late here in Covington or Florence. Hopefully, that trend will continue.

## 60 Second Updates

### Average 1.6 Percent Pay Raise Is Coming

As of Jan. 1, 2017, federal civilian and military employees will receive a 1.6 percent pay raise, according to a letter Obama issued to Congress. National Treasury Employees

Union (NTEU) President Tony Reardon, expressed concern for the federal government's ability to recruit skilled employees at current pay rates. The president has the option, under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act, to set a pay raise amount other than that prescribed by the law's formula, which he declined to do. An average 1.6 percent pay raise is too low, NTEU believes. Federal employees continue to deliver day after day despite agency budget cuts, continued attacks on the federal workforce and six years of little or no pay increases.



### NTEU to IRS: Stop Outsourcing, Keep Federal Employees On the Job

NTEU National President Tony Reardon opposes the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) outsourcing of tax-collection work when thousands of IRS employees are expected to be laid-off. The IRS announced contracts with four private collection agencies to collect unpaid tax debt. More than 7,000 employees are at risk of losing their jobs at sites that process paper tax returns, including here, over the next several years.

"Many of these workers have been loyal employees of the IRS for decades but only some of them will get other jobs within the agency," President Reardon said. "There's absolutely no need for Congress to outsource this important work to the most complained about industry in America when there's more than enough in-house talent available."

A highway bill that Congress passed last year requires the IRS to outsource tax collection to private collection agencies (PCAs). Before terminating the PCA program in 2009, an independently-reviewed study by the IRS found that IRS employees are three times more efficient at

collecting taxes than private tax collectors. The program projected a \$2.2 billion revenue, however resulted in a net loss of almost \$4.5 million to federal taxpayers.

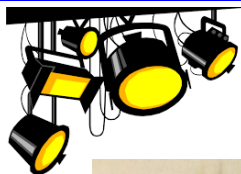
### No Government Shutdown

The Senate passed a 10-week continuing resolution (CR) (HR 5325) to fund the government through December 9th. The legislation then moved to the House, which also passed it. It is now awaiting the President's signature. He is expected to sign the bill. The new fiscal year begins on Saturday, October 1st.

### NTEU73 Annual Business Meeting is October 18. Come one, Come all!

The most important Chapter Meeting of the year will be held on October 18 at the Radisson Hotel in Covington. The meeting starts at 4:30. The 2017 budget will be announced during the meeting. Immediately following the meeting there will be a legislative event. All NTEU73 members are urged to attend and see your chapter in action.





# NTEU73 Steward Spotlight

Working Hard for NTEU73 Members!



## Loretha Hudson

Loretha has been with the IRS for 25 years and has worked in Accounts Management for 14 years. She has been a steward for about a year and fills in frequently in the flat top union office. She also helped a lot with this year's Labor Recognition week, helping to serve the hotdogs!

"I enjoy when the members leave with their problems solved and helping them to locate the information they need to complete their job," Loretha said. "It's nice to give back."



## Bryan Jackson

Bryan is a Management and Program Analyst, in the Site Coordinator Operation. He has worked at IRS for 11 years and been a steward for about 18 months. Bryan helps with technical and communications projects in the Chapter

"I think the most important thing about being a Steward is the chance to make a change on a local level with an impact across the nation and the federal workforce.," Bryan said. "We work to make employees lives better in so many areas. It's a good feeling."



## Ron Cunningham

Ron works in Unpostables, has been at IRS for 11 years, 5 years as a steward.

"I became a steward because I have been on both sides of the fence and I love working and associating with people," Ron says. "If I can help someone in need that has been wronged, that excites me and gives me a feeling of worth for myself. Everyone needs some help sometime and it is nice to have someone and somewhere to go that will support you like the union. . That is NTEU and I am proud to belong."

## 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**
- ◆ Night Shift Chief Steward **Bill Drier**
- ◆ Night Shift Steward **Julie Orick**

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

- ◆ Stewards **Michelle Robinson**, **Tommie Braswell** 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 an employee's evaluation changed from 4.8 to 5.0, and another changed from 4.0 to 4.6. Also, a grievant that was denied telework was given a settlement to do a telework trial for 60 days. She also got AWOL removed for an employee.

**Tomeka Cottrell** got two employees evaluations raised from 3.2 to 5.0!!

**Jim Gregory** represented an employee who was charged 5 hours of AWOL. The AWOL has been removed and 5 Hours of LWOP was put in place.

**Loretha Hudson** has been working with an employee in a tax compliance case.

**Laura Mitchell** was instrumental in getting an electrical outlet installed for an employee in Receipt and Control.

**Tonya Morris** has attended three TIGTA meetings for employees. She also got two appraisals raised for employees.

**Debbie Mullikin** got a three day suspension reduced to one day for an employee. She prevented an employee from being removed from the service and got a five day suspension reduced to a reprimand.

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