

National President Tony Reardon is a Hit During a Visit to Covington Campus

Employees enjoyed the talk given by NTEU National President Tony Reardon during a recent visit to the Covington campus.

Mr. Reardon spoke on both day and night shift. He also met with chapter leaders working on strategy to minimize impact on the affected employees during the coming shut-down of Submission Processing.

In an emotion charged address, Mr. Reardon explained how the decision personally affected him because he had gone through a similar situation when he was a child, as his father was involved in union work. He said that doing this to workers was “unacceptable” to him and that he would use all the resources of NTEU to fight this decision by IRS. Like leaders in Cincinnati, including the director, he was taken by surprise by the announcement. NTEU had

been given absolutely no warning of what was announced.



Attorney Will Igoe, NTEU National President Tony Reardon, NTEU73 President Rick Riley and National Council Mike McAuley prepare for employee meeting the flat top, Feb 1.

“We were so honored to have Tony here,” commented NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “I know he is working hard to make sure the people are taken care of.”

Mr. Reardon was very complimentary of NTEU73 President Rick Riley’s efforts on the local front.

It was the second trip of the National President to the Covington Service Center since the announcement. The first visit was the morning after the shut-down became public knowledge.

National Council Mike McAuley came into town from Chicago to attend the meeting, along with Chapter Attorney Will Igoe. Mr. McAuley has been named by the National President to head the bargaining team that will negotiate impact and implementation of the changes. Mr. Riley is also on the team, as well as local stewards Tommie Braswell, Will Kohler

and Nicole Guethlein. The team has briefed management on the issues and are awaiting a response. Negotiations are confidential until agreement is reached.

Legislative Conference in DC in March

The Annual Legislative Conference kicks of the month of March with hundreds of NTEU representatives visiting local representatives on Capital Hill.

This year, NTEU73 President Rick Riley, National Vice President Debbie Mullikin and Stewards Jeff Seibert and Jim Gregory will be representing the Chapter in Washington.

A series of meetings are set up by National NTEU and union reps will be discussing several federal issues including federal pay, health insurance and other

issues that are important to federal workers.

IRS workers are represented, but there will also be union officials from the other agencies which NTEU represents in the meetings.

“This happens every year and is really one of the union highlights of the year,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley.

There will also be a kick off session and a banquet. In past years, national leaders such as Al Gore, Nancy Pelosi and Joe Lieberman have spoken at the event.

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The Force

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From the Desk of the President

“As always, At Your Service”
— Rick Riley

Aww, Capitol Hill, where all the Senators and Congressmen work. The Original Puzzle Palace, where laws are written that even someone with a Law Degree gets confused. As you all know, it is the place that holds our future and our lives in their hands.

Annually NTEU and several other Federal Unions and associations descend on Capitol Hill to represent the Federal Employee’s issues. It’s not just the IRS, but also EPA and other agencies. This year is the most important year for Chapter 73 in its history. With the ramp down of Submission Processing and a new bill being proposed to change the way the country collects its taxes, changing from an Income Tax to a National Sales tax of 23%, the IRS would be abolished.

Although NTEU represents our concerns every day on Capitol Hill, they get more attention when Congressmen or Senators get lots of mail and visits from their constituents that is where you come in! Everyone that works here needs to be writing, calling and visiting their Senators and Congressmen. As the old saying goes,

there is strength in numbers, so the more that go, the more pressure we can bring to bear to defend our rights. No matter how many of us there are, we are invisible unless they see us. We have to act! This year a small delegation from Chapter 73 visited our Representatives and presented our case to protect our jobs and our benefits. That is just a good start though, and now it is your turn to turn out and show up. If you need to know who to call write or visit, contact one of the offices if you don’t know.

Patrick Henry once said “We must all hang together or surely we will hang separately.” That has never been truer than today.

If you aren’t a member, join, if you are a member, ask all your coworkers if they are, and if not, ask them to join. We must show Congress we are united and strong.

If you have any questions about how you can get involved, stop by any union office. Do not leave your future in someone else’s hands. Take action yourself. If everyone would do that, we could truly move mountains.



FREE Employee Tax Assistance is here!!!



(Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

For appointment call: 859-669-4211

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays
Monday, January 23, 2017 – Thursday, April 13, 2017

2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

4th Street: Room 39

If an interpreter is needed, please see your manager.

Social Security CARDS are required for everyone listed on the return!!

Photos of Tony Reardon's Visit



Telework Advancing Nationally for Customer Service Representatives

In 2016 IRS and NTEU entered into a 120 day pilot program (proof of concept—POC) for telework for telephone representatives across the country. This pilot was designed to work out kinks before CSR's are permitted to work telework across the country.

The Telework POC was implemented at the beginning of November 2016 for Customer Service representatives and Contact Representatives in Accounts Management (AM) and Automated Collection System (ACS) at various locations. By all accounts, the Telework POC is going very well. Chapter leaders at locations where the Telework POC was rolled out are reporting that the CSRs and CRs are very happy teleworking and would like to continue on telework.

Recently, IRS notified NTEU that it wishes to open bargaining to expand the Telework POC to other sites and additional employees. NTEU and IRS had discussions about the participants in the current Telework POC. While the

Telework POC MOU states the POC will terminate after 120 days and the participants will return to their normal worksite, the parties have reached an agreement and the employees who are currently teleworking will continue to remain on telework so long as the server that supports the telework is viable.

“The agreement is in the process of being signed by the parties, but I wanted to get this information to the chapters now as a result of scheduled 7114 meetings this week with the impacted employees,” said NTEU President Tony Reardon in a memo to chapter presidents. “IRS will give NTEU notice to open bargaining pursuant to Article 47 over the expansion of the Telework POC within 90 days. IRS has advised us that its notice will include a “phased approach” to the expansion of telework. It will increase the numbers, locations and business units that will be eligible to participate in telework, subject to new technology capabilities of existing and future locations. IRS does not yet

know the breadth of the expansion or the locations that will be added to the POC. The IRS also advised NTEU that it plans to soon convert the telephone recording system it uses (ASPECT) to a different telephone recording system.”

“Hopefully this will be great news for our own CSR's,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “We have been working this issue locally as a priority but because of the national pilot have not been pushing the CSR issue. I am really hoping that Covington will be added to the pilot. I think everyone agrees that it is not a question of whether CSR's across the country will be able to work from home, but when.”

NTEU73 has recently been working with employees in RICS/IVO to get them to work from home. A number have been working a “pilot” but others have been applying and are being faced with resistance. The union has been in contact with management in an effort to expand the program.

Team Nominated for Employees of the Year: After Management Fought Tooth & Nail

No one can say that the Employee of the Year celebration this year was without humor.

For two and a half years, IRS management in Innocent Spouse fought NTEU to prevent, yes prevent, employees from being given the opportunity to work from home. They forced the issue through the grievance process. Then they forced it into arbitration.

A independent arbitrator agreed with NTEU and ruled that the employees could work from home, as provided for in the contract.

The IRS said that they could not afford laptops for the people who wanted to work from home. So they spent much more and hired expensive lawyers to appeal the case to the National Labor Relations Authority (NLRB). Guess what? The NLRB agreed

with the arbitrator's decision and ordered, yes ordered, the IRS to allow these employees to work from home.

Being forced to allow it, management then began to work through the implementation issues. They formed a team of managers to decide how it was to be done.

Throughout the entire implementation process, they tried to freeze out the union. However, time and again, steward Debbie Mullikin had to “advise” them to prevent contractual breakage. Time and again, Ms. Mullikin was consulted and shaped the implementation process by keeping them on the straight and narrow. They would not even tell the union or the employees when they could begin to work from home.

So after fighting the entire way,

management saw fit to nominate their own to be Employees of the Year for the work they did on the implementation of something they did everything they could to stop.

Please do not misunderstand. We are not minimizing the work the management team did regarding implementation. It had never been done before and we are sure they worked hard on it. But so did others, not the least, Debbie Mullikin.

And for management to have the unmitigated gall to nominate their own team is beyond comment. Sadly, the team did not win the Employee of the Year award.

But take heart, IRS employees. They could and probably DID receive manager's awards. But we all know who really made telework happen!

Meet & Greets Scheduled

There will be a series of “Meet & Greets” with NTEU73 President Rick Riley. This is part of a commitment the Chapter President has made to make himself available to all employees. The President will be updating employees on current issues as well as hearing their concerns.

“It is a great way for me to keep up to date on what is going on in the work areas,” said Mr. Riley. “I think I learn more from having these meetings than the employees do.”

Mr. Riley has been having these meet-

ings since taking office in April of 2015. No other NTEU73 President did these kinds of meetings with the frequency that Mr. Riley has.

“I think it is important to be available to hear what the folks have to say,” continued Mr. Riley.

The latest meetings are scheduled for March 15 and 16, for both day shift and night shift. The schedule is as follows:

March 15, Flat Top Room 48 11-1pm

March 15, Flat Top Room 48, 8-11pm

March 16, GWC Room 507, 11-1pm

March 16, GWC Room 507, 8-11pm

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

Visit nteu73.org

**On Facebook:
Official NTEU
Chapter 73**

National Web Site

Letter From Tony Reardon to Rick Riley & the Chapter

The following letter was received on February 9 from NTEU National President Tony Reardon after his visit to the Covington Campus:

Dear Ricky:

I wanted to drop you a brief note thanking you for inviting me to visit with you and Chapter 73 in Covington. I really enjoyed getting to speak with the leaders and members; it was great getting to hear from them. That was a critically important part of the day as well.

I also wanted to thank you for picking me up at the airport and for the terrific dinner that evening. Finally, last but not least, I was really taken with the extraordinarily generous and beautiful pocket watch and personalized wooden case. That is a beautiful gift that is already on full display in my office.

Thank you again, for a terrific visit. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
Tony

NTEU73 Membership on the Rise

NTEU73 has set a goal of 60% membership and in recent weeks the numbers have been increasing.

The most recent membership report from National NTEU (October 2016) shows the chapter at 59.6%.

Since the first of the year, NTEU73 has added 41 new members, 21 of which were new hire term employees. That means 20 seasoned employees joined the ranks of NTEU.

“With those numbers, we could have just crossed the threshold of 60 percent,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “It takes about 30 new members to raise it a percentage point.”

The chapter has always stressed how

important it is to be a union member.

“The more people we have on our rolls, the more seriously we are taken by management,” added Mr. Riley. “To me, it is not about the dues money, it’s more about the percentage of employees who are union members. At one time, our chapter topped the 70% mark. Before I took office it had been allowed to slip into the mid 50’s. I am really happy that we have turned that around and are finally heading back in a positive direction.”

If you would like to join NTEU, simply drop by any office or see any steward. The more we have, the stronger is our voice with management. NTEU is working to make the future brighter.

NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A. J. Allen, Brandy Belew, Tommie Braswell, Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Ronnie Clemons, Ron Cunningham, Kristina Fryman-Henry, Leann Gosser, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, Bryan Jackson, Will Kohler, Krystal Lear, Shannon Lovins, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Shawana Oliver, Lori Riedinger, Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Jeff Seibert.

GWC—Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Steve Clark, Jamie Coffman, Erin Cooper, Tomeka Cottrell, Loretha Hudson, Bob Krekeler, Tanesha McCants, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (President), John Selmeier, Toby Shields, Melinda Smith, Debbie Steiner, Dennis Stone, Rebekah Taylor, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (Vice President-Chief Steward), Julia Wiley (Secretary).

IRRC - Florence - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea, Brandon Mikusa.

Night & Swing Shift

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

GWC—Alison Bower, John Gilliam, Julie Orick.

60 Second Updates

2018 Pay Raise Legislation

Legislation has now been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) that would provide federal employees on the General Schedule and Wage Grade pay systems with a **3.2%** pay increase effective January 2018. The *Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR)* bill is similar to Representative Gerry Connolly's (D-VA) legislation, H.R. 757, which was introduced yesterday in the House. NTEU strongly supports this Senate legislation, and appreciates Senator Schatz's continued leadership on pay issues on behalf of federal employees.



Due Process Under Attack

Legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Barry Loudermilk (R-GA) that would upend the current adverse

action procedures under title 5 United States Code for employee removals. Under the bill, agency heads would be able to propose removal of an employee based on performance or misconduct, with seven to 21 days written notice. The employee's limited opportunity to respond would be required to occur before the last day of employment (within the seven- to 21- day possible time frame in the notice period), and there would be no right to be represented by an attorney, union official or any other representative. While an appeal of the removal would still be allowed under the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB), it would be required to be made not more than seven days after the date of the removal and the MSPB would only have 30 days in which to issue a decision, based on substantial evidence. If the MSPB were unable to act within the 30 days, the agency head's removal would be considered final. NTEU and its allies on Capitol Hill are working to stop these legislative attacks on employees—and our right to represent employees—from becoming law.

NTEU Supports Paid Parental Leave

NTEU joined four members of Congress on Capitol Hill in support of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act. This new legislation would guarantee new parents would be paid for six of those weeks. Under current law, employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for a new child or to care for a family member.

"During the last ten years, while almost every major US corporation has instituted and expanded paid parental leave policies the federal government has failed to step up for its own employees. That is why it is so important that this legislation becomes law now." said Reardon.

Public Trust/Employee Safety Initiative

NTEU will engage frontline field employees to serve on an Employee Safety Team as part of a public trust and employee safety program being announced at the IRS. The IRS is launching the Public Trust and Employee Safety (PTES) initiative to combat rising identity theft and impersonation scams and make it easier for law enforcement and the public to verify the identity of IRS field employees.

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 **Sarah Corea** and **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Night Shift Chief Steward **Julie Orick**

Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

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

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

Tommie Braswell had AWOL removed for an employee.

Jim Gregory got 8 hours of AWOL changed to LWOP. He also represented an employee with TIGTA and the case was closed.

Nicole Guethlein had AWOL removed for an employee.

Will Kohler helped an employee go part time.

Tonya Morris submitted a written reply and had 8 hours of AWOL reversed. She also got overtime pay for an employee.

Debbie Mullikin is working on grievances regarding violations of A34 Sick Leave, A50 Telework, A23 AWS and lastly A18 & NPAA.

Chris Pierce is working on an appraisal case, and a couple of AWOL cases. He had another case sent to EEOC upon further review.

Lori Riedinger helped an employee receive LWOP instead of AWOL.

Michelle Robinson helped an employee get sick leave approved for a family member.



NTEU73 Steward Spotlight

Working Hard for NTEU73 Members!



Laura Mitchell

Laura is in her first term as Treasurer of NTEU73. She has done a phenomenal job of keeping all the chapter finances straight and making sure they are audited.

Laura works full time in the Flat Top union office. She helps organize events and does special projects for the Chapter.

Laura has worked at IRS for 24 years and is currently assigned to TEGE. She has been a steward for about two years.

“People need to be respected by their manager,” she says. “I have seen a lot of instances where the union really helped an employee’s situation. The union does a lot of great things.”



Jeff Seibert

Jeff started at the IRS in 1988 and is currently assigned to TEGE phones. Jeff served as NTEU73 President for two terms and is in his second stint as the Chapter’s Director of Communications. He is also manager of the Flat Top union office. He started **The Force** in 1996 and it has been published ever since. He also established the first chapter website in 1996. Under his watch, NTEU73 received numerous national awards for **The Force** and for the website.

“NTEU73 has been an important influence in the workplace at IRS for years,” Jeff says. “I cannot imagine what it would be like at IRS if we had no union!”



Karen Walsh

Karen is the Vice President and Chief Steward of the Chapter and works out of the Gateway Office. This is her second term as Vice President and third as Chief Steward. She has been actively involved in the union as an officer since 1996.

“On AWS? Work Credit Hours?” Karen asks. “Telework? You can thank your Union for these hard fought for privileges. And if those aren’t reasons enough to support your Union, then you should know that National NTEU together with local NTEU leaders are fighting for better pay and benefits on an ongoing basis. No one ever wants to get in trouble. But if you do, wouldn’t you be glad you had job insurance?”

Coping With Stress At The IRS

by Will Kohler, NTEU73 Steward

Well it’s that time of year again at the IRS and the tax season is officially upon us. And while some workplace stress is normal, the oft times excessive stress within the service can interfere with your productivity and performance. It can even mean the difference

between success and failure on the job. Here are some helpful TIPS to help you all make it through the busy season:

SHARE: Sometimes the best stress-reducer is sharing your stress with someone close to you. The act of talking it out and getting support and sympathy from friends or even a

Union steward can be a highly-effective way of blowing off steam and regaining your sense of calm.

BE HEALTHY: Avoid excessive sugar and caffeine at work. If you feel your stress mounting try to take a quick break and move away from the stressful situation. Take a stroll and do laps around the building. Physical movement can help you regain your balance.

SLEEP: Get enough sleep. Work stressors are magnified when we’re sleep-deprived and foggy-brained. Aim for eight hours of sleep each night. Sleeping well can help you solve problems with a clearer mind.

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING: Maintain a positive attitude (and avoid those without one). Negative attitudes suck the energy and motivation out of any situation, so avoid it whenever possible. Instead, develop a positive attitude — and learn to reward yourself for little accomplishments (even if no one else does).

We at NTEU 73 hope that these tips can be of some help. And remember our door is always open for members who have problems and/or issues. NTEU 73 I we here for YOU!

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.



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The National Treasury Employees Union



“No one knows when an accident will happen. That’s why it is called an ACCIDENT. Car wrecks, burns, falls, cuts, etc. Be sure to sign up for your \$9 accident policy this week! Remember: The coverage goes with you if you leave IRS and the rates are special for federal employees!”

United Benefits Schedule

Gateway Center - March 6 thru March 10, 9:00-4:00 pm.

Fourth Street - March 6 thru March 10, 9:00-4:00 pm.

Thursday, March 9, 7:00-11:00 p.m.

Florence - Thursday, March 9, 9:00-4:00 pm.

Call for an Appointment: 423-309-2758

