

The Force

Spring Cleaning

As we look forward to the weather warming up, some of us may also be looking forward to spring cleaning our homes. This should also be applied here at the workplace! Throw out that stack of paperwork you haven't needed for years. Throw out those ink pens that don't write anymore, move things on your desk and use antibacterial wipes or spray to clean under them. Wipe down your mouse and keyboard and dust off that monitor! With seasonal allergies, many of us experience the sneezing and coughing. We all know that COVID, though not talked about as much anymore, is still a factor also. Those who share workstations certainly do not want to use a mouse or keyboard someone's germs have been spread on. The dust settling on your desk and equipment can also be problematic. It's not good for your health or the health of your equipment. Dust can block filters and prevent air from flowing through the computer, causing it to overheat. It can also cause a shortage in circuit boards and integrated circuits causing computers to crash and, in some cases, even catch fire! Keeping your work area clean and sanitary is very important for everyone.



Brandi Riggs

Have You Downloaded the NTEU App?

Download the app from the Apple or Google Play stores by searching for 'NTEU' and visit the [NTEU app webpage](#) for instructions on logging in.

iPhone users



Android users



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Use of Leave



The use of leave, could never be talked about enough if you ask me. As a steward, this is the most common issue brought to us. Managers have their standards of what's acceptable. I am not saying they are wrong, but just not always right. An easy fix is to stick with what our contract outlines. The National Agreement is the best source for all different types of leave. This information is in Articles 32,33,34, 35, and 36. It provides the available options when it comes to taking leave. It also explains how to effectively communicate that with Management.

With our work dynamic forever changing, it is important that you effectively communicate with your manager when you are not going to be at work or your POD. If you need to utilize your leave, no matter what the situation, employees are required report their absence via email or a phone call to their manager's work voicemail. I don't advise using your non-work email as IRS can likely block those emails from coming in. When reporting your absence, the only information needed is:

- Your Name
- The type of leave you are using
- The number of hours you are using.

You do not need to go into the details of your need for leave. It is your responsibility to make sure your manager knows of your absence and that you keep a record of your communication. As a Federal Employee, you must know your rights as an employee. Please take the time and read through the National Agreement, as it pertains to your use of leave.

The IRS also has guidance in the Internal Revenue Manual (IRM) 6.630.1 Absence and Leave. IRM 6.630.1.13 (03-15.2013) Absence without leave (AWOL) explains AWOL is a non-pay status for any absence from duty, that's not officially and properly authorized. It goes on to explain the scenario in which AWOL should be charged.

When an employee:

- A. Is absent without permission;
- B. Has not notified his or her manager of the absence in accordance with established procedures; or
- C. Has not provided satisfactory documentation or an explanation for absence from duty.

Please do not just sit with AWOL because your manager charged you with it. Come to the Union and talk to one of our Stewards. We can help you! Per the contract, we have 15 business days to fight the AWOL charges from the date you receive your AWOL slip. So, make sure to reach out asap! You might think an hour here or there may not be a "bad thing" but those hours start accruing, and if you are teleworking and accrue 41 or more hours, you can be disciplined and lose that privilege.

One of the biggest perks we have, as federal employees, is the flexibility it provides when we need to be away from our post. Our Union continues to fight hard to ensure this is standard across the agency.

Rachel Lovins

STEWARDS' CORNER

Your NTEU Stewards are here to fight for you! We are available in person, by phone, email, or skype!

GATEWAY STEWARDS

President:

Debbie Mullikin

Vice President:

Chris Pierce

Secretary/Chief Steward:

Shannon Lovins

Day Shift Full Time Stewards:

Loretha Hudson, Rachel Lovins,
Angela Moore, Brandi Riggs

Day Shift Part Time Stewards:

Tonya Morris, Nicole Guethlein,
Jennifer Smith, Thomas Bayer, Shonda
Collins, Alistair Blair, Brandy Belew

Swing Shift Chief Steward:

Alex Walker

ISO BUILDING

Treasurer/Full Time Steward:

Janet Colwell

NTEU EMAIL

ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington@irs.gov

Loretha Hudson was able to get two employee's evals raised to 5.0

Angela Moore got an eval raised and AWOL removed.

Debbie Mullikin got a removal reduced to a 3 day suspension.

Brandi Riggs was able to get an employee's FMLA time restored that was incorrectly used. She was also able to get AWOL removed.



If you joined the union during May 2022 - September 2022, please stop by the office to pick up your check.

Show Up?

There are 3 Branches of Government. The Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial Branch. The IRS is an agency of the Department of Treasury and reports to the President/Executive. This makes us employees of the Executive Branch of Government, per High School Civics and 5 USC 105. Please note, HR 139 does not impact the Judicial (Courts) or Legislative Branch (Congress).



This legislation is intended to take a swipe at the Executive, by way of employees. Nasty little triangulation, but not new. It, absolutely, is punitive. This part of Congress does not want the current Executive Administration to treat its employees like most other corporations treat their professionals. How demeaning is it to call this the *Show Up Act*? Agency employees Show Up every day! We have worked to ensure all the laws, rules, and regulations Congress enacted were followed. We didn't make those laws. But we sure worked our collective butts off to make sure our customers got their refunds, stimulus payments, answers to questions, and cases worked. Then those particular legislators made us part of a negative election campaign. Telling the taxpaying public there would be 85,000 gun-toting Revenue Officers wandering around the US trying to squeeze money out of turnips. This Agency has been understaffed and underfunded for over a decade. Look around, we are still understaffed and underfunded!

Mr. Comer publicly claims the reason for the delays in processing returns and refunds are due to telework. Most Agencies were behind long before emergency telework forced us all to stay home. Shame on him and management for blaming Covid for every possible problem, when the truth is the IRS shut down 2 Service Centers, without ensuring the Service Centers receiving that work, were ready. The Agency understaffing had gotten to the point that Customer Service Representatives weren't allowed to work "paper" for long periods, because the level of service on the phones was the priority. It didn't matter that working paper would cut down on the calls to find out where the paper was. The level of Service was calculated using "Industry Standards." That would be how many phone calls credit card companies answered.

Congressman James Comer, R, District 1, KY, has sponsored a bill requiring every *executive* agency to return to pre-pandemic telework, eliminate any expansion and conduct a study to determine the adverse impacts of expanded telework. Not to determine the impact of telework, the bill specifically requests the adverse impact. In the legislation, he includes the cost and maintenance of unused, leased, or owned space, locality pay for teleworkers, and insecure network/communication tools. He doesn't care that production went up, overall. He doesn't care that employees could have a work/life balance. He probably wishes Agency employees had to buy more gas, created more emissions, or put more miles on their pos vehicle and had to buy another. There are Lessors, used car salesmen, and gas station owners donating to his campaign, as you read this.

What HR139 intends to do is strip every Executive Branch employee, who couldn't telework in 2019, of telework because Biden has *showered* Federal employees with perks and pay raises. That may not be them but it absolutely is "us."

Debbie Mullikin

Babe Ruth, The Great Depression, and Annuities

What do fixed index annuities have to do with the greatest major league baseball player of all time? The Babe took advantage of one of the greatest solutions to protecting retirement income – fixed index annuities.

In 1922, Babe Ruth was the highest-paid baseball player. He made a salary of \$52,000 per year (\$904,725 in 2022 dollars!) playing for the New York Yankees. The Babe spent the early part of the roaring 20s blowing through his tremendous salary. He was well on his way to going down in history as one of the many athletes who lived lavishly, spending recklessly towards bankruptcy.

In October 1923, at the urging of his business manager, Babe met with future Hall of Famer Harry Heilmann of the Detroit Tigers. Harry worked in the off-season as an insurance agent for The Equitable. With Harry's guidance, Babe purchased a deferred annuity with his World Series winnings and a portion of his annual salary. Throughout the next seven years, Babe continued to make additional annuity purchases.

When Babe began making his annuity purchases, he had no idea that the roaring 20s would come to a crashing halt in October 1929 when the stock market crashed, and the Great Depression began to take hold. Babe was forced to retire from baseball in 1935 since he could no longer stand the physical toll on his body. Once the highest-paid player in baseball, he found himself unemployed in the midst of the Great Depression.



Babe didn't have to worry; thanks to his previous planning with Harry Heilmann, Babe was able to begin receiving payments of over \$17,500 per year in annuity payments. \$17,500 a year in 1934 is equivalent to \$381,729 today. While other athletes and celebrities of the time found themselves in breadlines and destitute, The Babe lived comfortably in retirement and never had to worry about running out of money. The Babe was so impressed with the power of annuities in creating financial security that he directed his estate to purchase a lifetime payment annuity for his wife at the time of his death so that she would always be taken care of.

While Babe can't teach us to hit home runs, he left behind a lesson in financial planning that we can all benefit from. By taking advantage of the protection of annuities, you can retire knowing that you'll never run out of money, no matter what happens in the stock markets. A fixed index annuity is a protected account that guarantees lifetime income that will increase with

stock market upturns but will never decrease – insulating you from stock market downturns.

Get in touch with a United Benefits Specialist to explore your options so you can relax and enjoy your retirement worry-free

United Benefits

NTEU73
Memorial Day Event

STRICKERS GROVE

11490 Hamilton-Cleves RD
Hamilton, OH 45013

Date: May 27th, 2023 Time: 12 PM - 7 PM
All Ages - Rain or Shine

6 TICKETS PER MEMEBER

Can buy additional tickets for \$5 dollars
~ Members must be present with ALL guests ~

Food will be available for purchase

*** Pack a Picnic ***

No Alcohol or Liquor is allowed to be carried in to the park
Front gate will be staffed to check coolers

- Rides - Roller Coasters - Drinks - Popcorn -
- Cotton Candy - Snow Cones -



Winner from United Benefits
drawing- Amelia Ruft



CINCINNATI ZOO & BOTANICAL GARDEN

Follow the steps below to access your company discounts throughout the current season!

1. Scan the QR code for quick access or go to <http://cincinnatizoo.org/prepare-for-your-zoo-visit/> and select CORPORATE/AFFILIATE DISCOUNTS!
2. Enter your Company Code for your discounted admission! Discount is applied at checkout.

**Parking discounts are not included with this offer.*

\$2.00 OFF

Adult Admission

**Flat \$2.00 Off All Child/Senior Admission*

Company Code:

nteu73

zoo
blooms



APRIL 1-30

Tunes & Blooms
CINCINNATI ZOO & BOTANICAL GARDEN



APRIL 6-27

Zoo Babies



MAY 1-31

HallZooween



LAST 3 WEEKENDS
IN OCTOBER

Scan the QR
code now to
access your
discounted
tickets!

2023



Have questions? Email GroupTickets@cincinnatizoo.org. cincinnatizoo.org/groups



UNITED
BENEFITS

SPECIAL ENROLLMENT AVAILABLE NOW!

NEW LIFE INSURANCE PLANS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

United Benefits is excited to announce a new life insurance program for Federal Employees.

This policy provides up to \$150,000 of coverage for federal employees. In addition, there are options available to cover spouses, children, and grandchildren ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

LIFE INSURANCE POLICY AVAILABLE

- Permanent coverage
- No physical required
- Dividend-paying policy
- Locked-in price with constant premiums that will never increase
- Payroll deducted

**ONE-ON-ONE
APPOINTMENTS**



Schedule your free one-on-one appointment by scanning the QR code or visiting

<https://unitedbenefits.com/massmutualcl/>

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