

NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES' UNION

CHAPTER 67

Peoples Voice

NTEU Chapter Officers

President:

Jenny Brown
620-7021

1st Vice President:

Robert Lawrence
620-6511

2nd Vice President:

Lori Roach
620-6511

Secretary:

Shellee Gamble
620-6223

Treasurer:

Vicki Gibson
620-2076

Chief Stewards:

Shannon Cook-Days
620-6222

Wendy Guerra-Swings
620-6508

Oral Reply Coordinator:

Vicki Gibson
620-6000

2014 Legislative Conference

Earlier this year Chapter Leaders traveled to Washington DC to participate in NTEU's 2014 Legislative Conference.

Chapter officials met with Congressmen Jim Matheson and the Legislative Assistants to Rob Bishop, Jason Chaffetz, Chris Stewart, Orrin Hatch, and Mike Lee to discuss many federal issues including: the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), sequestration; federal pay, retirement, and contracting.

For 2014, health insurance premiums increased an average of 3.7%. With federal employee pay frozen in 2011, 2012 and 2013 many federal employees have found it increasingly difficult to continue to afford their health insurance coverage. NTEU urged Utah Congressmen to support adoption of prescription drug purchasing reforms in the FEHBP and to oppose efforts to limit federal employee and retiree access to the FEHBP or shift further costs to enrollees.

After three years of their pay being frozen, federal employees received a 1% pay increase in January 2014. Based on the Employment Cost Index, a measure of tracking private sector pay, average wages have increased by 6.5% over the last four years while federal wages have increased by 1%. Federal

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WHEN SHOULD YOU CONSIDER MEDICAL RETIREMENT?

First, are you eligible for medical retirement? An applicant must have worked for the agency at least 18 months, must have a disability or illness that makes it impossible to do the full scope of your job, a disability or illness that is expected to last more than a year, and you must have tried all reasonable options to help perform the full scope of your job, (FMLA, Reasonable Accommodation, etc.).

Next, request a retirement packet from ERC. This packet will include a form for immediate retirement (FERS SF-3107); a form for disability retirement (FERS SF-3112) which will contain forms for you, management and your medical professional to complete; a form for continuation of life insurance (FERS SF-2818);

and finally a form W4P for changing of withholdings after retirement.

You will also need to apply for disability through the Social Security Office; you can either do this online or by going to the Social Security Office. If you plan to withdraw all or part of your TSP you will also need to obtain a TSP packet from the TSP website and will be sent separately to TSP this does not go to OPM.

Now that you have determined you are eligible and have received your packet you will need to gather all the documentation and mail it to the address on the packet (OPM). As an added bonus for being a Chapter 67 Union member we will walk you through this process if you need help call the Union Office and request to set up an appointment with someone for medical retirement.

Heaters, Fans, and Contracts... OH MY

If you work in the Scowcroft or Lincoln Center buildings you may have heard employees are not being allowed to use heaters and fans in their cubical even though this is a contracted right.

NTEU is actively working to rectify the current situation. First, the office and officers have made contact with management showing management's clear violation of the contract and demand that they allow employees to use their heaters and fans once again.

The Chapter President has also held a meeting with the Director to show that clearly this was a violation, and NTEU has won an arbitration case showing that the claims management have made in reasoning for the violation are null and void; the arbitration win essentially makes their argument irrelevant.

NTEU has filed a grievance on the employees behalf. NTEU is currently waiting for a response to the third step grievance meeting. Unfortunately, it is expected that this case will go to arbitration. What does going to arbitration mean to

you? This means that it will take some time and patience on your part.

NTEU is aware of the denial of reasonable accommodations that were requested to keep heaters and fans. There has been a mass grievance filed on the denials of those reasonable accommodations as well. NTEU encourages you to continue to put in for reasonable accommodations if it is a medical need. Don't remove these already approved appliances from the premises, instead unplug them as directed and place them to the side.

If you apply for a reasonable accommodation please bring your response to the office. We can use your response in our grievance if it is denied, and use it to bolster our argument if it is approved.



Lincoln Center

Scowcroft Building

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Employees provide critical services to Americans every day, and yet are subject to the same economic challenges other Americans face and the pay freeze has left federal employees significantly behind the private sector. Just like all Americans, federal employees have rent or mortgages to pay. Health insurance premiums have risen and grocery bills and gasoline costs have increased as well. NTEU is pushing for a 3.3% pay increase for federal employees for 2015.

Sequestration required lengthy federal employee furloughs at many agencies, as well as hiring freezes, training cuts and the inability of many agencies to perform their basic functions. The federal government shed 80,000 jobs in 2013 alone. Since Fiscal Year 2010, the IRS budget has been reduced by almost \$1 billion and the agency's frontline service and enforcement personnel have been reduced by almost 10,000. Overall, enforcement revenue is down by more than \$4 billion since Fiscal Year 2010 which coincides with a decrease of 3,100 enforcement personnel over that same period. NTEU is fighting for adequate agency funding for Fiscal Year 2015 and support for efforts to

cancel the sequester.

Since 2010, federal employees have contributed \$21 billion to deficit reduction through increased retirement contributions. Those hired after December 31, 2012 saw an increase of 2.3% of their salaries and those hired after December 31, 2013 saw an increase of an additional 1.3%. Despite these facts, proposal have been considered in Congress seeking further significant increase in federal employee contributions toward their retirement, ending the FERS supplement for those who retire before age 62, changing the retirement formula from high three to high five, eliminating the FERS defined benefit entirely, and reducing the COLA

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increase each year by using the “chained” CPI as the benchmark instead of the current CPI. Congress needs to roll back the recently enacted pension contribution increases and to oppose any further reductions in the value of federal retirement benefits.

Substantial savings can be found in federal contracting. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), in fiscal 2013, government spending on contracts exceeded \$460 billion. We believe that many of these contracts, especially those for consulting and management services, are unnecessary, and do not provide a good value to either federal agencies or taxpayers. There needs to be comprehensive review of ALL federal contracts, an end to contracts that do not directly provide services to taxpayers, and reinvestment of those savings in front-line employees. To find out what you can do to help us, To find out what you can do to help us, please take a look at our legislative page on our website www.nteu67.org, or contact the NTEU office.

Centralized Evaluative Review

Will this process be an improvement, a mistake, or are they just bringing back the tried and true that should have never been changed in the first place? This will be up to you to decide. I plan to provide the pros and cons as I see them, and to give you managements view as told to me. NTEU and IRS have negotiated at the national level and come up with a pilot or (‘proof of concept’ as they called it) for AM that will be held in Ogden, Denver and Oakland first, and then in Austin and Dallas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide a fair, unbiased review process. * Remove this portion of your managers and leads duties to allow them time to do what their original job duties entailed. * Remove the adversarial part of you and your managers’ relationship as far as review goes. * Allow more ‘face time’ with your manager. * Provide an equally trained team of experienced CSR’s or TE’s to do all of the review on CIS. * Advancement possibilities are now available due to the review positions being GS 9 & GS 11 for bargaining positions and there is a good possibility that there will be GS 8 reviewers as well. * Increased review from 2 to 4 per month. This gives each employee a better chance at a higher % of quality. * An automated system will be used to select which calls and cases are reviewed, nobody can choose who or what they want to review. * Reviewers will be reviewed both on efficiency and accuracy. * There is a provision IN WRITING now that says if you get an error that is unusual for you ‘on a typical day’ due to unusual circumstances, or a hardship situation - your manager can choose to ignore it when preparing your yearly evaluation. 	Pros / Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Team size will increase from 15 to 18, so your team will be larger. ◆ Some managers may think the extra time they have will be best suited to ‘micro-manage’ their employees (even more than some already do). Management assured me that these instances should be fed up to Jan Runyen or Sharon Davies. They both told me that this is a high priority project and that Director MaryAnn Thompson wants to know if this happens. ◆ AM will collapse 14 teams to accomplish this endeavor, because there isn’t extra money to hire more people for the pilot. They have to rely on the resources available right now. ◆ Some leads and managers may roll back to former positions if they are not selected for the pilot. ◆ Some employees will inevitably get their evaluations lowered due to having a technical person doing their review, whereas they have not had that happening previously. *Remember that there is a strict process that has to be followed for this to happen though, Article 12 of our National Agreement has to be followed to a ‘T’ in order to lower any evaluation of a bargaining unit employee.
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So I guess it’s up to you to decide for yourself if you think this new (or rather - this ‘old’) process will be an improvement over existing circumstances or not. If you have any questions or comments about how the process is ran please feel free to contact the office. We are constantly looking for feed back from members about the processes management implement. You can contact the office via phone (801) 620-6511 or 6756, via email NTEU67@gmail.com, or walk into the office and visit with one of our stewards in the office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LABOR RECOGNITION WEEK

Ogden Amphitheater
343 25th St Ogden, UT



- LOCAL VENDORS
- PRIZES
- FOOD
- FUN

SEPTEMBER

Raptors

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!

Opening Day
June 16th!
Purchase your
discounted
tickets now.
\$7 box seat
tickets



Contact
NTEU
Office @
Ext. #6511

Buy a voucher and redeem it any game this season

NTEU 67 CAMPING



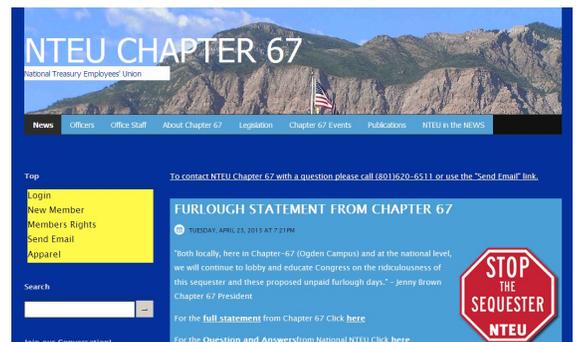
WEBER MEMORIAL PARK AUGUST

For more information about the events or how to get involved...

STOP THE SEQUESTER



Visit our
WEBSITE
→
or
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←
Facebook
page!



NTEU CHAPTER 67

Peoples Voice Staff

WWW.NTEU67.ORG

Daniel Martinez- Editor-in-Chief

Jenny Brown- Co-editor

Lori Roach- Contributor

Shellee Gamble- Contributor

Kristal Miller- Contributor