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NTEU

The National Treasury Employees Union

Chapter 97

Feb-March 2008

Our Union.... NTEU..... Our Voice

As the 2008 Legislative Conference in Washington D.C came to a close, many NTEU representatives throughout the United States left the conference feeling confident that their voice was heard. "Our Union...NTEU...Our voice" was the message NTEU wanted to leave in D.C and we believe it was.

NTEU Chapter 97's Legislative Committee was fortunate to meet with Congressman Jim Costa's staff, as well as the staff of Congressmen Dennis Cardoza, Devin Nunes and Senator Diane Feinstein to address important issues such as FEHBP and Health Care Affordability, Partnerships in the Federal Government, Government Privatization, Fair and Equitable Pay, DHS Personnel Issues as well as Retiree Issues. The meetings were nothing less than a success. The Congressmen and staff were eager to listen, many took notes on the issues and shared their opinions as well as their concerns with NTEU's staff.

Chapter 97 President Jason Sisk and committee were also fortunate to attend a town hall meeting with Sen. Barbara Boxer.

During the months of March and April, Chapter 97 will be posting voting records and any feedback received on the issues addressed during the conference.

It pays to network and share ideas with other chapters. During a conversation, the issue of distributing a Legislative newsletter came up. In the next few weeks, Chapter 97 will be proudly issuing a Legislative newsletter that will focus exclusively on Legislative issues.

Rep. Devin Nunes & NTEU

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Non Compliance Issues & Unauthorized Access

One of the first things each employee is told upon taking a job at the Internal Revenue Service is "Never access a friend's account, a relative's account, a spouse's or ex-spouse's account because the consequences are severe!" If the first time was not enough, this same speech is repeated again in formal meetings (also known as FAB Briefings) year after year. This does not stop many employees, unauthorized accesses happen daily and many employees lose their jobs over it.

Most employees do not know TIGTA monitors every command code, every Social Security Number entered into the computer and has many tricks to verify you have committed UNAX. You will be caught!

NTEU will research your case and perform an oral reply on the member's behalf. Oral replies are exclusive to *NTEU members*, so join today. NTEU advises every employee to think twice before committing UNAX— don't lose your job or get suspended. If you receive a letter, (even if you are on furlough status), contact NTEU right away at 454-6626.

It's that time of the year again, where everyone is in a rush to file their taxes. NTEU encourages every member and non-member to slow down, review their tax return, ensure *all* income has been reported and paid on a timely basis. Each year, NTEU is notified by many members that a letter was received for a non-compliance issue. Non-Compliance issues are serious and should be treated as such. Employees have faced tough penalties and many more are currently battling a suspension or a possible removal because of a non-compliance issue. Don't let this happen to you. Take your time, double check your return, make a copy, take steps to ensure it is received and be safe, not sorry.

NTEU Enforces The National Agreement! Will Management Ever Get The Message???

Issue: Unauthorized Access (UNAX)

Submission employee was charged with a UNAX violation and faced removal from the service. Vice President, Michelle Gardea was successful at getting the removal reduced to a 30 day suspension after an oral reply was done on behalf of the member. Article 39

Issue: Absent without Leave (AWOL)

Submission employee was charged with 57 hours of AWOL for not supplying enough medical information. Per Article 34, employees are to furnish a reasonably acceptable explanation or evidence. Vice President, Michelle Gardea put management on notice, management removed the AWOL, counseling, and changed the leave to the appropriate leave.

Issue: Evaluation

Employee with only one error in the entire rating period, received a "meet" in the job knowledge aspect of the performance evaluation. Vice President Michelle Gardea, met with the Department Manager, discussed the issue and it was decided that the aspect should be raised to "exceeds". Article 12

Issue: Letter of Reprimand

Compliance employee received a letter of reprimand for a not filing the outside employment form as required in unit expectations and in Article 6 of the National Agreement. Assistant Chief Steward Chris Killian filed a grievance on behalf of the employee and was successful in getting the letter of reprimand reduced to a letter of admonishment. IRM 6 & APM Guide for Managers.

Issue: Evaluation

Submission Employee received a performance appraisal reflecting a "failing" in CJE 3(Customer Service Satisfaction) but yet the narratives from the manager showed the employee was meeting expectations. Assistant Chief Steward Chris Killian met with management and was successful in resolving the issue informally. The employee is to receive a corrected evaluation. Article 12

Issue: Overtime

Tower employee was denied 7 hours of overtime due to management's oversight to input the 5081 which would allow IDRS access. Employee showed up to overtime but was sent home after 2 hours because she was not able to get on IDRS. 7th floor Steward Mario Gonzales and Operations Manager negotiated the issue and a mutual agreement was reached. The employee is going to be given the opportunity to make up the 7 hours at her convenience.

Issue: Evaluation

Compliance employee received an evaluation that was lowered by management without any previous counseling. Article 12, Section 4M states in part " counseling will take place when a supervisor notices a decrease in performance". Compliance Steward Jill Guzman met with management to discuss the issue and was successful in getting management to issue the employee a corrected evaluation and any related award amount.

Issue: Evaluation

Compliance employee received an evaluation that was lowered based on the employee being new to the department. Article 12, Section 4R, states in part "the fact that employee assumes new tasks, changes positions, does not create a presumption that his or her performance is only fully successful". Compliance Steward Jill Guzman met with management and was successful in resolving the issue informally. The employee is to receive a corrected evaluation and any related award amount based on correct score.

Issue: Back Pay

Submission Code & Edit employee learned he was harmed when he was not called back to work during the October bubble, and missed out on 10 days of work and 26 hours of overtime. Submission Steward Wanda Rivera contacted the Department Manager to discuss the issue and looked into getting the issue resolved informally before filing a grievance. Management agreed that the employee should have returned to work during the bubble and is entitled to the 10 days of regular pay and 26 hours of overtime. Article 14 & TEPS Guide

It Benefits To Be A Member Of NTEU

For the last 3 years, Membership/Benefits Coordinator, Marcella Gutierrez has been busy looking and finding new discounts for NTEU members. This year, 2008, is no exception.

With summer rapidly approaching, NTEU members can expect to set sail to "The Island," The Island Waterpark, that is, with a deal that will be fun in the sun.

For those traveling to Northern California over the Summer, Raging Waters in San Jose has also partnered with NTEU. Tickets for each water park will be sold in the NTEU office.

Have a love for thrill rides? Then you will be thrilled to learn NTEU just partnered with Magic Mountain. Members can purchase tickets for only $24.99! That's a 50% savings!

NTEU members can also receive discounts on food!!!!

Exactly how much does an extra large 4-topping pizza cost these days? $13.99 if you are a NTEU member! BC's Pizza in Clovis has offered this sweet deal not only for one visit, but for up to 5 visits. Coupon cards are available in the NTEU office. Must have coupon for discount.

On a budget? Looking for a good lunch under $5.00? Sam's Pizza on Chestnut & Olive offers a lunch special consisting of a mini pizza (up to 4 toppings), a 16oz soda for $3.95 plus tax. No coupon necessary.

For those who prefer a restaurant over a pizza parlor, NTEU has you covered. The Elephant Bar in River Park offers NTEU members a discount of 15% off lunch.

If interested in receiving more information regarding membership discounts or if you think you might know a place that can offer NTEU members a discount? Email Marcella Gutierrez at Marcella.m.gutierrez@irs.gov.

Any new discounts will be published in upcoming newsletters as well as in fliers. Keep an eye out!

Announcement Cards

Every year, hundreds of members complete an Announcement Card to request items such as vacation packages, NTEU credit card applications, hotel/motel discounts and many other NTEU offers.

Unfortunately, NTEU has discovered that there is a large amount of members who are not aware that Announcement Cards exist.

Each building, has an NTEU bulletin board and a take-one bin. Announcement cards can be found in each take-one bin.

Please complete one today! All requests can be sent to stop 97, Attention Marcella Gutierrez or faxed to 251-4021. Please remember to include a stop number and phone number. Also, if you have moved in the last 6 months, please include your current address. All requests are mailed to the stop number listed.

Furloughed Members also are eligible for membership discounts. Visit our website (www.nteu-97.org) download the Announcement Card and email, or fax it in. It's that easy!

If requesting a vacation package, please allow until mid-March for your order to be filled. Most theme parks will not receive their 2008 shipment until March.

NTEU will receive it's shipment shortly after that. We thank you for your patience.

All other requests from the Announcement Card will be filled and ready to mail in 48 hours.

NTEU Wishes Long Time Steward, A Happy Retirement

After, 30 years of service at IRS, and 30 years of being a devoted member & active steward of NTEU Chapter 97, Toni Cedillo says good-bye.

Toni began her journey in 1978 as mail clerk but had no idea where her job would take her or how many friends she would meet along the way. Throughout Toni's career, she has journeyed through the Collection Branch (where she received her perm position), then she traveled to Criminal Investigation (CI), Accounting, Examination, and lastly, Accounts Management.

Toni has been a part of six administrations and held positions such as a steward, chief steward, Membership Coordinator, Legislative Leader and a National Vice President for NTEU.

Toni would like to leave the current administration and future administrations with one piece of advice "always be open with the employees, keep them updated with changes and keep them informed with newsletters". Chapter 97 would like to wish Toni a very happy retirement! She will be missed.

National Treasury Employees Union

Chapter 97

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CHECK US OUT,
WE ARE ON THE WEB!
WWW.NTEU-97.ORG

Newsletter ideas?
Got questions or suggestions?
Email:
marcella.m.gutierrez@irs.gov

Did You Know????

Did you know….

That most managers, department managers, operation managers and directors, are not allowing NTEU 30 minutes after each formal meeting as outlined in the contract? NTEU has taken this issue to arbitration and won. Unfortunately, management is a slow learner and has chosen to continue to commit the violations. NTEU expects the agency's appeal to be denied very soon. Meanwhile, we will cite Article 8, Section 1F which clearly states in part " The Union representative may inform employees that if any of them wish to discuss the meeting topic with him or her further in private, the employee may come to the union office once they have checked out of the unit". If you have been told you are not allowed to speak with NTEU after the meeting, please contact NTEU because your rights have just been violated. NTEU will be filing individual grievances for everyone who was denied their time with NTEU.

Continued……

Your Assistant Chief Stewards are waiting to hear from you. Please give them a call today if your rights have been violated.

Submission Days: Susan Vasquez-Quiroz Ph 454-6626

Submission Swing: Chris Killian Ph: 454-6626

AM Days: Pete Quiroz 454-7308

AM Swing: Jerry Zarate Ph: 454-7308

Compliance Days: Ray Guerra Ph. 458-7714

Compliance Mid Shift:: Jeannie Presswood Ph. 458-7714

Did you know….

You can request a steward when you are asked to meet with management?

Did you know a union steward can attend a unit meetings at the request of the member? More importantly, did you know that NTEU strongly advises you to contact President Jason Sisk, Vice President Michelle Gardea or TIGTA expert Mario Gonzales, if you have been approached by TIGTA Officers and are asked to meet with them? Never enter a TIGTA meeting without NTEU by your side.

NTEU encourages all members to become familiar with Article 5 and Appendix 1 regarding TIGTA meetings.