

NTEU CHAPTER 49 NEWS

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2013 Pay Raise (At Least A Raise is Proposed)

We've withstood a pay freeze. Many of us are wondering when there is a salary increase in sight. This is one, but it's not much. The administration has announced it will propose a 0.5% (one half of one percent) average increase in pay for us in 2013.

We at Chapter 49 are pleased that any increase is now being proposed. But let's face it, we've been giving at the office for years and we need a larger pay increase. Here's why:

The two-year pay freeze continues through 2012 and will contribute \$60 billion over ten years in deficit reduction. The Employment Cost Index (ECI), which measures private sector wages, has increased 1.4%, 1.6% and 1.7% respectively over the last three years...for a total of 4.7%. The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act calls for across-the-board federal pay increases equal to the annual ECI increase minus one half percent, plus locality payments aimed at closing local pay gaps.

Even if federal employees received only ECI minus one half for 2011, 2012, and 2013, they would have received a total raise of 3.2%, rather than the proposed one half percent.

Clearly, the math in the law says we need a larger increase than .5%.

These are not good economic times for our country, but we believe federal employees have done their fair share to help address our budget problems, and we at NTEU have been strongly urging the administration to end the pay freeze and propose a fair increase for federal employees in 2013. Something more reflective of private sector increases would have been more fair and appropriate.

While, Congress continues to consider extruding the pay freeze for one to three more years, we will continue to fight those efforts and work toward increasing this proposed pay raise before it would become effective in January of 2013.

Chapter 49 Website Is Up and Running - We are also on Twitter

After a long absence for technical and a number of other reasons, NTEU Chapter is back up with a Website. The address is the same as the previous one....www.nteu49.org

This will allow us as a local chap-

ter to communicate quickly with you. In this day and age, communications move fast. We will do our best to keep this site up to date on a regular basis.

In addition, Chapter 49 is now on Twitter. If you are a twitter user,

you know this is a great way to receive information quickly. Follow us at

@NTEU49

We are also working on a Facebook page. Check the Website for the latest on that.

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NTEU Chapter 49

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New MOU on Telework (Flexiplace)



We all know government likes to assign acronyms and titles to all sorts of things we do every day. Working at home or an alternate location has always been called Flexiplace in IRS jargon and even in our contract language. Most of the federal government has called this program Telework. It's the same thing.

NTEU Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IRS on 1/4/2012 to implement a new statute, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. This law provides a requirement for all employees in a Telework program to receive mandatory training. Sounds reasonable so far, right?

Well, IRS decided it wanted to required training for all employees on Telework, even for those

workers that have been on this program since it was first implemented in the 1990s. NTEU thought this was overkill and pushed back hard on the management proposal. IRS finally backed down. We have an agreement that requires new employees to take the training, and makes it optional for those already in the Telework program. Whether you are taking the mandatory training or are exercising your option to take it as a current Teleworker, you will receive on-the-clock work time to take the class. This will be an ELMs course and it is estimated to take about an hour.

This program has been a very popular one for a number of IRS employees and it is NTEU's intent to continue advancing Telework in a way that is advantageous to you. This MOU is a step in that direction.



IRS & NTEU Battle Over Pseudonyms NTEU WINS

There are a number of IRS employees that use pseudonyms as a safety and protection tool. For a long period of time, IRS has allowed employee pseudonyms if needed.

When IRS revised IRM 10.5.7, there was no notice provided to NTEU allowing us to bargain over this change in working conditions. Management responded this it considered this change "de minimis" (legal latin meaning it's so small it cannot be measured). NTEU strongly disagreed, pointing out the impact on Gov Trip, travel cards, smart cards, and an 11-year-old agreement IRS currently has with NTEU over pseudonyms. Even in the face of all these facts, management was steadfast in its position that there was no legal obligation on their part to bargain

over these IRM changes.

NTEU filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) 3-16-11. The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) then ruled in NTEU's favor by issuing an unfair labor practice change against IRS. Once that ruling was made, IRS and NTEU reached a settlement agreement that requires IRS to enter into bargaining with NTEU over changes to the following IRM Section:

- - IRM 10.5.7.4.1 and 10.5.7.4.3 - to the process of when an employee who is approved to utilize a pseudonym can begin using the pseudonym;

- - IRM 10.5.7.5—the process to be used for employee withdrawal or removal from the pseudonym program.
- IRM 10.5.7.11 through 10.5.7.14—new language setting rules and procedures to be used by bargaining unit employees with pseudonyms when they travel; and
- IRM 10.5.7.15—changes made regarding the use of pseudonyms in HSPD-12 Smart ID Cards.

The pseudonym process is a major safety and security issues for many of our members. NTEU will continue to protect the process that allows you to use pseudonyms.

The Chapter 49 President's Corner

On This and That.

Well we finally got the word on the second round of buyouts. Kind of disappointing in my view. They apparently are offering them to roughly 400 employees. A touch more than half are in the bargaining unit and not a one in Indiana. I know several of you out there were hoping for one but unfortunately they kept it VERY narrow. I already know what the next question will be....Will there be a third round? I very much doubt it this fiscal year. I believe that they have crunched their numbers and decided they could live with very small slice being offered early outs and/or buyouts. I'm betting they believe they will still get a lot of natural attrition with more employees retiring. It will be interesting to see how this plays out the rest of the fiscal year.

Speaking of buyouts, Chapter 49 Treasurer Dean Crawford took one and retired as of December 31st. Long time NTEU Steward, Scott Carder, graciously agreed to take over for Dean to keep the Chapter's finances on the straight and narrow. We appreciate you stepping up Scott!

As I write this there are 3 big items being negotiated nationally that will impact just about every employee (some more than others). The first is the re-opener on the 2009 National Agreement II. This could impact everything from Awards to Flexiplace to your workspace. The second is the Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) negotiations and the third is the Customer Service Agreement re-opener that impacts all phone employees.. I am on one of those teams and have been consulting with the other 2. I can tell you that NTEU is doing everything we can to push back on any proposal that limits your rights as employees (and believe me between the 3 negotiations there are many). My belief is that all 3 will end up going in front of an Arbitrator to decide some of the key issues in each since we will not be able to come to agreement. I will be sending out more details as they become available.

I was on a briefing last week for NTEU with regard to whether the TACs will be offering return prep this year. As of right now, no decision has been reached. The 3 Chapter Presidents on this call explained to the person in Charge of the TACs (that's the walk-in for you seasoned folks) that many taxpayers have come to depend on this Service over the years and we don't want any negative impact coming back on employees if they decide to eliminate this service. We should hear in the next week or so what the decision shall be on that and if they took our concerns into consideration.

If you are looking to do your return fairly early, here is some good news. Employee W-2s are now available on the Employee Personnel Page. Just remember to file your return(or an extension with the tax that's due) by April 17th this year. The Chapter would love a year when we don't have to defend anyone who didn't file timely.

Lastly, I want to offer a big thank you to recent retiree, Larry Lannan. As many of you know, Larry was a vital part of the Chapter for many years before he went into management. Since he has retired his head has cleared and he's back assisting us.

Larry has set up & will be our webmaster for the Chapter's site that is back up at www.nteu49.org. We will also be on Facebook and Twitter in very short order. More details on that on the website. He will also be providing content on it and the newsletters (like he has on this one) as well as help us out on the Legislative Committee. Welcome back Larry and Thanks for all the help!

That's it for now.





NTEU Chapter 49 is working hard every day to help your work environment and other issues. Please do not hesitate to contact one of the Union Stewards with any questions you may have. We are always available for your questions, comments, and concerns. We are growing stronger every day and if you are not a member, please join us.

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is finally up. You can go
to www.nteu.org**