

NTEU CHAPTER 49 NEWS

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I SURE COULD USE SOME EXTRA

Workforce Reduction

We at Chapter 49 want you to know when there is danger to your job. Such a danger is emerging in the House Government and Oversight Committee. The bill (HR 3029) would only allow one federal employee to be hired for every three openings. A similar proposal (HR 2414) does the same thing.

HR 3029 has passed the committee November 3rd. Two NTEU supported amendments softened the measure somewhat, call for contractors to have funding reduced proportionately, and requiring agencies to report to Congress when programs or services must be reduced or terminated as a result of this legislation. Even with these

amendments, NTEU is opposing this bill.

Think your inventory levels are unmanageable now? Think your office is understaffed due to the current hiring freeze? This legislation, if enacted, would be a disaster for enforcing tax compliance, customer service and all those supporting employees in these core jobs.

The provisions of this legislation will drastically reduce an already shrunken federal workforce, will not produce savings, and will result in reduced services to the public. While the bill claims work will not be shifted to contractors, it opens an enormous loophole to allow new costly contracts when there is a claim of "financial advantage".

Private contractors generally cost more, are less accountable, and are unable to do the work as well or as efficiently as federal workers.

NTEU vehemently opposes this bill, and we will work against moving it through the legislative process.

Mid-Term Bargaining in Full Swing

We are now involved in very important mid-term bargaining (negotiating between the beginning and end of the National Agreement).

The number one issue is preserving the National Awards

Pact. Even though the management finds new and creative ways to foul-up this system, for the most part it works and is a very valuable right that was bargained for you by NTEU. IRS management is taking the

Position that a recent OPM memo requires the agency to reduce next year's awards money pool by as much as 40%, meaning next year's award amounts would be much less than the money you received in

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Mid-Term Bargaining in Full Swing (cont'd)



September if you qualified for an award. Needless to say, NTEU does not see the OPM pronouncements the same way. This will likely be a grueling negotiation and Chapter 49 will keep you up to date.

The Customer Service Agreement is being reopened by NTEU. If you work in the local call center, you are certainly aware that there are a number of issues that need better resolution. NTEU will seek to address a number of items that arose when the 2010 CSA was implemented,

including read/meet time, ASPECT, Automated Time Tracking System, auto available, and annual leave procedures. Chapter 49 President, Duncan Giles, will be serving on the NTEU bargaining team.

Finally, there are talks scheduled on the Employee E-File program and VITA.

All these negotiations will be held at the national level. As always, Chapter 49 will keep you informed on any important developments in these important bargaining sessions.

IRS Moving Quickly On Buyout Offers



Once a federal agency decides to move forward with early out and/or buyout offers, it happens very quickly...that's what is happening here at IRS. A list has already been provided of positions and locations in the first round of offers. Any Indiana NTEU member has been notified by Chapter 49 President, Duncan Giles, if an offer is forthcoming. There are 26 people in Indiana getting these of-

fers. Nationally, NTEU is wasting no time in negotiating an agreement to move forward with these offers in a manner that will protect your rights under the law. This round of offers is being made to people not on the front lines dealing with taxpayers. If another round is needed, you have seen Commissioner Shulman's message that offers may be made to those on the front lines of dealing with the public. Any additional

offers will depend upon what Congress does with the IRS budget. We at Chapter 49 will be monitoring early out/buyout developments very carefully because we know so many of our members are keenly interested. If you have questions, or are trying to confirm or debunk the latest buyout rumor, contact the Chapter 49 steward nearest you.

News Flash - NEW W& I Commissioner



Rick Byrd will be retiring as W&I Commissioner after 36 years. It will be effective at year end and Deputy Commissioner, Peggy Bogadi will replace him.

The Chapter 49 President's Corner

Boy, it's a shame there is not much going on. Oh, there is? Well let me tell you what I know/think.

Let's start with the VERA/VSIP situation (early outs/buy-outs). From what I can tell, they are indeed very targeted. There are just under 3000 total across the Service that will be offered this opportunity in round one. In Indiana, we had a total of 26. That amounts to about 3.8% of our bargaining unit workforce. None of these folks are directly involved in taxpayer contact. I have given the impacted employees who are members a heads up about this. I have no idea what the numbers are yet for the non-bargaining unit employees.

As of last night, there was not an MOU on this, so we don't know all the details (off rolls dates, will there be an opportunity to job swap with someone else if you do not want a buyout/early out & they would love it, etc.). I'm expecting this to be finalized by the end of the week. I do know that this is entirely voluntary and do not believe these folds will be subject to job abolishment if they are not ready to go out.

I also believe that this is not the end of this. With as hard hit as I believe our budget will be hit, I think there will be another round of these needed to achieve the kinds of cuts, I believe our next fiscal year's budget will demand. I do give Commissioner Shulman kudos for explaining to Congress what will happen to service & enforcement if our funds are cut this drastically. I further applaud him for going the buyout route instead of trying to just abolish jobs and RIF people. In this situation, he is trying to do the right things. Who & how many will be offered buyouts if there is indeed a second round, I just do not know at this time. All I can tell you is Chapter 49 as always will get the information out to you as soon as possible.

Speaking of Congress and the budget, we are still up in the air. The Super Committee has to come to an agreement by just before Thanksgiving or mandatory cuts will occur. I am not sure either will happen. I do not have any great hope that anyone in DC can agree on where to go for lunch much less come up with over a trillion dollars in "savings". I also cannot seem them cutting as deeply into the defense budget as the automatic cuts would dictate without an agreement. I think they will end up passing some sort of legislation that will effectively kick this can down the road until after the 2012 election.

What does this mean to us as employees? Nothing good, because everything is still up in the air. From extending the pay freeze to changing our retirement from high 3 to high 5 as well as possibly increasing what we pay into our retirement and health insurance. All of these are still out there. NTEU will keep battling against these types of cuts but as always we need your help. To see what you can do to help your own financial future on your own time and computer, go to www.nteu.org.

Lastly, we just had 4 new Stewards join the Chapter and an old friend return to help us out. Linda Clark and Lillie Fleming are new Stewards at the Call Site. Anna Christy in Greenwood and Zoe Olgy in Merrillville have completed their first training as Stewards as well. Welcome Ladies!

Larry Lannan recently retired. The Chapter decided to put his numerous talents to good use. Larry will be our webmaster for our site that should be up and running by years end and will also be helping us out legislatively. Welcome back Larry!

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.

**NTEU Chapter 49 Website
under construction—will let
you know when we are
there!**