

The Force



The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA)

was passed by the previous Congress funding the IRS for the next ten years. The current Congress has negotiated, through threatening to default on the country’s debt, to pull back approximately \$21 billion. The money left will be spent on hiring, training and development, programming, and equipment.

For years, we were under the restrictions of Sequestration. There was no hiring authority unless it was an emergency. As employees left for better agencies, retired, or quit, those of us still here did more work until there were just too few of us to get anything done. Then Covid happened. Covid has been blamed for the backlog of work. That is a cover story. We didn’t have the people, equipment, or training to do everything that needed to be done, for nearly a decade! Within a few months of the start of Covid, the Agency was failing to meet demand. That didn’t happen just because of Covid.

Throughout Sequestration, NTEU lobbied Congress to fully fund the IRS. We explained, in detail, that the tax-paying public deserved to have a fully staffed agency. That tax compliance would go down if the IRS was not fully staffed and funded.

Here’s where Covid comes in... many people were out of work while the country shut down due to a pandemic. Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Taxpayers who hadn’t filed returns for years, filed returns so they could get the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) payments. Even long-time prisoners, with no income for years, filed returns. After filing those returns, they started calling to ask, “Where’s my ARPA payment?” Suddenly, everyone noticed there weren’t enough humans at the IRS. It took hours to get a call answered. The Agency had shut down 2 Submission Processing Centers. There weren’t enough people to open the mail. No one was around to process the returns coming in by the truckload.

Throughout all this, NTEU was lobbying Congress, and the President for funding. Tony Reardon, NTEU President was testifying at hearings. Commissioner Rettig was testifying at hearings. Some in Congress felt like we should be able to get more done with even less than we had. After all, we should be glad to have a job when others didn’t.

Being glad to have a job doesn’t add hours to your day or days to your life. Being glad to have a job doesn’t make your computer stay connected. I was thrilled to have a job. It didn’t make the programs on my computer any faster. In fact, one whole month during Covid, I called the help desk every workday to get issues with my computer resolved.

All the while, NTEU was telling everyone who would listen, “It takes funding to get stuff done!”

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Use of Leave

Finally, Congress passed the IRA, which included unprecedented funding. And why not? Sequestration saved \$1.1 trillion. They saved that money from our paychecks. Raised the price of retirement for new hires, twice. Furloughed us without pay for 3 days. Refused to budget reasonable pay raises, and on and on. Then the new majority in the House held the good credit of the United States of America, hostage to take it back! They claimed in their campaign materials that the IRS was going to put 87,000 jackbooted Revenue Agents on the streets. First of all, no one at the IRS wants or needs 87,000 Revenue Agents. We all know “clerks move the work.” Nothing would get finished, if all the IRS did was hire agents. Don’t get me wrong, we need Agents. And Agents have a difficult enough time without Congress making them out to be Brown Shirts. This rhetoric has truly endangered the lives of all IRS employees. Elections have consequences!

But what we really need are Tax Examiners, Contact Reps, Financial Technicians, Paralegals, Analysts, IT, HCO, etc., and even Managers. Wouldn’t it be nice to have the same manager for a whole year?

The IRS, specifically, Commissioner Werfel, has committed to spend what’s left of the IRA money on hiring, so there are enough of us to do the job. Training, so we and the new hires know how to do the job. Equipment, because we must have computers and printers that work to do our job and chairs that don’t tip us out.

IRS, particularly Accounts Management, is holding SOP meetings to explain all this. The meetings are less than transparent. So, for clarification purposes:

Right Now, in this place, you have opportunities. The Agency is hiring for nearly every position on the Org Chart. Don’t wait! Get your resume ready, and apply for every job you ever thought you might possibly want, even on a whim. Apply externally and internally.

Do you need or want training? Ask your manager for it. Want to be developed into an analyst? Ask for a developmental opportunity. Need special equipment? Ask!

I am not saying you will get everything on your wish list. But now definitely is the time to ask.

We’re here for you.
Debbie Mullikin

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



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

Swing Shift Chief Steward:

Alex Walker

Vice President:

Chris Pierce

Swing Shift Part Time Stewards:

Chad Rosen

Secretary/Chief Steward:

Shannon Lovins

ISO BUILDING

Treasurer/Full Time Steward:

Janet Colwell

Day Shift Full Time Stewards:

Loretha Hudson, Rachel Lovins,
Angela Moore, Brandi Riggs

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Tonya Morris, Nicole Guethlein, Jennifer Smith,
Thomas Bayer, Shonda Collins, Diane Gallina, Brandy
Belew, Charlotte Hill, Suzanne Jackson, Ericka
Raleigh, Kendra Steveson, Luke Terhaar, Maureen

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The 2023 Summer Membership Campaign will run from May 21, 2023 through Sept. 9, 2023
An incentive of \$50 will be paid to the new member. The recruiter will be paid \$25.

*Incentives will only be paid for new members who have not been a member of NTEU within the past year.

*Payments from the NTEU National Office will be made at two points during the campaign, (in August and in October), with the final payment following the conclusion of the campaign.

**All new members and recruiters will also be entered into the drawing for a prize (TBD). This will be drawn at the end of the campaign, when final lists have been processed by National NTEU.

Life Insurance

Life insurance is essential when protecting your family in the event anything should happen to you or a loved one. From covering burial costs, ensuring your mortgage is paid, replacing income for your family, and creating your legacy for your estate, there are different life insurance plans to fit your needs.

What is life insurance?

Life insurance is a contract between the policy owner and the insurer. The policy on life insurance guarantees that the insurer will pay out a lump sum of money to any beneficiaries named on the policy when the insurer dies. The policyholder pays premiums throughout their life to keep the policy in good standing.

What are the three main types of life insurance and the differences between them?

There are three main types of life insurance: term life, whole life, and universal life. While all are good options, each have differences that may make one option better for your needs.

Term Life Insurance

As the name suggests, this policy covers your life for a period of time (called the term) you pick. Terms can range from 1 to 30 years or more. Term life insurance is the

most affordable option because it only pays if you die during the term covered. In addition, it offers income replacement or mortgage protection, appealing to anyone with dependents or younger children. Term life insurance is a solid choice for people who want to cover any financial obligations that come with raising a family and supporting them in the event of their death.

Universal Life Insurance

You may hear this referred to as a flexible premium plan. Universal life insurance is a hybrid option that you can build to mimic a whole or term policy. They have customizable terms allowing you to choose coverage from 10 to 100 years. The plan flexibility is a significant draw, as is the ability to use it like a term or whole policy. A Fixed Index Universal Life Plan is an excellent choice if you're trying to build your retirement income tax-free.

Whole Life Insurance

Whole life insurance is also known as traditional life. Whole life insurance provides coverage up to 100 years of age before it pays out to you. At age 100, this plan endows and will go ahead and pay you your death benefits. Unlike term policies, this policy never expires. Your beneficiary will have the policy

paid directly to them upon your death, no matter how long you're alive. In addition, it builds a cash value account that works well for wealth building and retirement planning, and it could pay dividends directly to you if you go with a mutual company. The policy premium is locked in for the duration and will never change.

What does life insurance cover?

Life insurance gives a death benefit for the beneficiaries on the policy after the policyholder's death which can help reduce any financial burden associated with settling your affairs. This includes debt settlements, funeral costs, income replacement, and the estate. Debt settlements, funeral costs, income replacement, and planning the legacy for your estate often come to mind when thinking of end-of-life planning.

One of the biggest reasons people get life insurance is peace of mind. Easing financial stress on your loved ones when you pass and knowing that they'll get a death benefit to help settle your affairs can be a massive weight off of your mind. In addition, life insurance can help support your family and keep them in the lifestyle they're accustomed to when you die.

If you're interested in protecting your life, we're here to help. A United Benefits Specialist will help you explore your options.



Do you know what the *Show Up Act* means for you as a federal employee?



If you are unfamiliar or unaware of the Show Up Act (HR 139), I implore you to keep reading.

On January 9th 2023, Congressman James Comer, R, District 1, KY, proposed to the Administration, that the “unnecessary expansion” of telework has hurt the ability of federal agencies to get our jobs done and that it is time for us to “return to work.” We have been working tirelessly since COVID-19 making over all production, efficiency, and customer accuracy our number one priority. Not to mention employee happiness being the highest it has been in over a decade & continuing to improve daily. To quote Mr. Comer directly, “The SHOW UP Act ensures our government shows up for the people we are here to serve, because American workers across the country show up every day. Federal employees should follow their example. I am pleased the House has passed this bill and urge the Senate to take it up without delay.”

Mr. Comer finds pleasure in disturbing & disrupting the life/work balance that federal employees have been able to obtain post-pandemic by forcing every *Executive Agency* to return to pre-pandemic Telework policies with his outlandish allegations. Mr. Comer has put the blame on telework for the backlog while failing to mention the backlog existed pre-pandemic! Telework has not stopped us from serving Taxpayers to the best of our ability. Consistent budget cuts for the past decade that left employees underfunded and understaffed, several shutdowns causing employees to go without pay or working for free for long periods of time and forcing them to leave the service to survive, is what has truly hurt the ability of federal agencies to get the job done. Not Telework!

What Implications Would This Have on the Federal Workforce?

On February 1st, 2023, the House approved the *Show Up Act* (HR 139). If the Senate agrees with the House, the Show Up Act (HR 139) will strip EVERY *Executive Branch* employee of telework returning agencies to Pre-Pandemic practices unless covered by a Reasonable Accommodation (RA) covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

With that said, don’t walk, RUN to the *NTEU Legislative Action Center* (www.nteu.org/legislative-action/nteuaction) and take action today! Make sure members of Congress hear from you! Make your voice heard loud & clear! In just a few simple steps you can send a letter to your Congressman & Senator.

Is writing not your strong suit? Not a problem. In less than five minutes and a few simple clicks, it is all done for you & sent on your behalf.

It is time to make our voices herd and let the Administration know we have been showing up! It is time for the Administration to *Show Up* for us!

Diane Gallina

STACK UP TIME FOR SUMMER FUN



As summer weather moves in on us, we are ready to put on those swimsuits, jump into a pool, take those trips to Coney Island and King's Island, or sit back and enjoy the outdoors. Or maybe you're ready to take that trip out of town to see the ocean and put your feet in some sand! But when you have no annual time to use, you have got to let those beautiful days pass you by while waiting for quitting time or put off your trip to see the palm trees and waves.

Now is the time to start saving your annual up for those days you want to relax, take in the sun and take advantage of all the summer fun, or to plan that trip out of town. If your department offers credit hours, take advantage of the time, so when those beautiful weather days roll around, you will have some paid time off to enjoy with family and friends. Work those rainy days to save up time for the sunny ones! And for when you do have some time outside, here are a couple of refreshing drink ideas to enjoy on those hot summer days and nights! ENJOY!!!

FROZEN LEMONADE

Ingredients

- 4 cups (1 qt.) vanilla ice cream
- 2 cups refrigerated lemonade (such as Simply Lemonade)
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice (from 1 orange)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)

Process all ingredients in a blender on high speed until mixture is completely smooth, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

LIME FIZZ

Ingredients

- Crushed ice
- 3/4 to 1 cup Lime Simple Syrup
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
- 3 1/2 cups chilled club soda

Fill a large pitcher with crushed ice. Pour Lime Simple Syrup and lime juice over ice. Add club soda and stir gently to combine. Serve immediately.

Brandi Riggs



Hitting the road this summer? NTEU members get discounts on rental car reservations from Avis and Budget and hotel accommodations when staying at a Choice Hotel.

Before making any reservations, log into NTEU.org and visit the [benefits page](#) for exclusive links and discount codes.

Hotel/Motel And Car Rental Discounts

Choice Hotels Enjoy a 10 percent discount on reservations at participating Choice Hotels. These hotels include Sleep Inns, Comfort Inns, Quality Inns, Clarion Hotels, Friendship Inns, Econo Lodges and Rodeway Inns.

Avis Car Rental Avis offers NTEU members a discount on all rentals. Whether it's during the week or on the weekend, using the Avis/NTEU AWD number will have you on the road with extra money in your pocket.

Budget Rental Cars NTEU members can now enjoy discounts at Budget. For personal and/or business rentals, NTEU members will get the best rate available and can save even more with re-usable coupons.





UNITED
BENEFITS

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NTEU
National Treasury Employees Union

RETIREMENT COUNSELING AND BENEFITS ENROLLMENT

IN-PERSON APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE

Come by or set up an appointment for guidance on the following topics:

▲ RETIREMENT

- Assisting with Retirement Paperwork
- TSP & 401(k) Strategies
- Survivor Annuity Options
- Calculating Your Pension
- Social Security Strategy
- Early, Deferred, & Disability Retirement
- FERS Retirement
- FERS LEO Retirement

SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

- Short-Term Disability
- Hospital Indemnity
- Critical Illness
- Dental & Vision Insurance
- Permanent Life Insurance for Employees & Family

ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS



Schedule your free one-on-one benefits review by scanning the QR code or visiting us at

unitedbenefits.com/christopherlee/

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