

T H E G U A R D I A N

NTEU United!
**SUMMER
MEMBERSHIP
CAMPAIGN**

See page 3

Inside this Issue

- I Belong NTEU..... 2
- NTEU United! Membership Campaign.....3
- Ode to Saratoga..... 4
- Day's Work...."Employee Tax Compliance".....5
- Ch68 Blog...."Play it Safe"...Withholding.....6
- Stewards Working For You..."Appraisals".....7
- People Organized to Win Employee Rights..... 8

- Ch68 Sponsored Events
 - 2019 Labor Recognition Cookout.....9
 - L&L ...Jim Bailey, National VP..... 10
 - United Benefits....Benefits & Retirement Counseling....11
 - BC&BS Retirement Planning.....12

- Spring Sudoku..... 13
- Chapter 68 Officers..... 14



I Belong NTEU

I'm proud to be in NTEU because I believe they can and have made a difference. Back in the late eighties I was first introduced to NTEU. I took a semester off from college to care for my father who was dying from cancer. I needed a quick seasonal job to get me through. My first week at work I was greeted by an NTEU rep. who encouraged me to join. That year, after joining, I found myself picketing on the front lawn holding up hand colored signs to take a stand for employee issues at hand.

Years later I returned to work at the IRS where at one point I discovered my health insurance had been taken away by poor mishandling of my records. I was then advised that only a life event could get it back. I was about to go for major surgery when a wonderful NTEU representative stepped in and fought for me and got my health insurance back just in time to save my life. I will forever be grateful. I have been here for almost 20 years and have been encouraged by so many people whose lives I have witnessed being changed because NTEU was ready and willing to make a difference.

Sincerely, Heidi Joy Neumann

Please share your I Belong NTEU story with us @ nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov





SUMMER MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

\$80 incentive for new members to join NTEU during our *Summer Membership Drive*.



This year's 2019 membership drive for will run *March 31st through September 28th, 2019.*



This is what **UNITY** Looks like



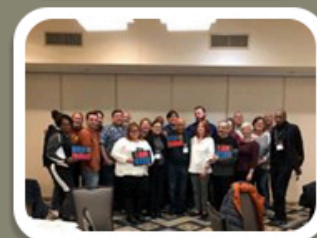
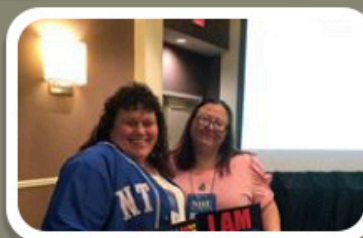
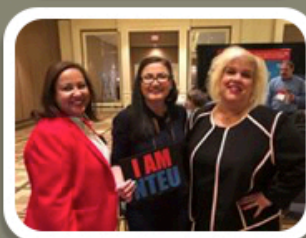
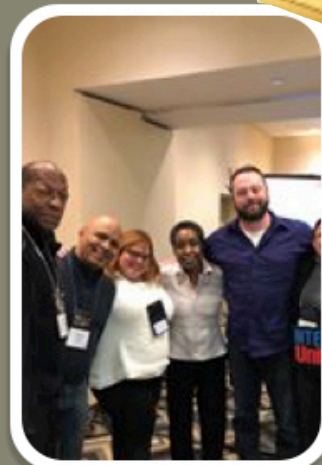
Join NTEU in our fight for better pay, a secure retirement, adequate agency funding and improved workplace rights and benefits.



Join NTEU now through September 28th you can get an **\$80.00** cash incentive.

Please visit the Union Office or see your area Steward for assistance.

Campaign Rules available at the Union Office



NTEU Chapter 68 Leaders and Its Steward Cadre Gather for National Training in Saratoga Springs, NY. This year's themed training is "Ode to Saratoga."

After the opening session, participants were separated into one of three training tracks: 1. Seminar, or President's track; 2. Leadership (for experienced Stewards); or 3. Representational/Stewardship track (for New Stewards). With each training track being structured to the level of those attending, participants received training on legislation, litigation, labor law, duty of fair representation, communications, grievance handling, Q&A session with National NTEU President Tony Reardon.

One of the big topics this year was Executive Orders instructor-led by Mr. Ken Moffet, NTEU Director of Negotiations. NTEU's legal battle continues against the administration's anti-employee, anti-union executive orders (EO). NTEU will not allow the administration to roll back decades of established law guaranteeing federal employees the right to collective bargaining. We will keep you updated as the fight continues.

As you can see, the training provided a ton of insight and knowledge to those who attended and we hope that they left this training with the necessary skills that are required to provide benefits to our Chapter 68 members!

NTEU WORKING FOR YOU

Federal Employees are held to a higher standard when it comes to compliant with the filing and paying of taxes. This is a very true statement, there is no getting around it. A bargaining unit employee must be compliant with their federal tax obligations. There is a fine line that one must draw when determining the intent of an individual. This is very often a subjective matter. Understanding the system that makes these determinations is a crucial part of educating yourself and ensuring that you are being compliant with your tax obligations.

This issue is covered under Section 1203 (b)(8) “Willfully failing to file a tax return on or before its due date, unless it is due to reasonable cause. Willful failure to file any tax return required under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 on or before the date prescribed therefore (including any extensions), unless such failure is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect.” Section 1203 (b)(9) covers “Willfully understating federal tax liability. Willful understatement of Federal tax liability, unless such understatement is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect.”

“Willful means the voluntary intentional violation of a known legal duty for which there is no reasonable cause.”

The Employee Tax Compliance Program sets out twice a year to identify potential non-compliance issues. It is very important that you respond immediately to any inquiry you may receive from ETC asking you to clarify a potential issue. Do not panic if you receive this kind of inquiry. This inquiry is meant to give you an opportunity to explain your situation. You have the right to consult with the NTEU during this process. It's important to explain your situation completely and try to leave very little room for assumptions on the behalf of the deciding official. An employee is given the opportunity to correct any mistakes that may have been made on the tax return in question, or set up payment arrangements if necessary.

There are some things you need to be aware of when filing taxes. Not being able to pay is not a reason to not file your tax return. If you are due a refund, you are still required to file your return or file an extension by the due date of the return. It is your responsibility to check your return before submitting it to the IRS even if you go to a tax preparer. Having an outstanding debt that may offset your refund is not reasonable cause for failure to file your tax return or extension timely. Any time you are able to file/ pay timely and you instead make a decision not to comply with your tax obligation this is considered “Willful”. It is better to file the return or extension timely and then take the opportunity to sort through whatever your compliance issues are.

*The recommendation to either close the issue or to forward it to Labor Relations and Management is the next step in this process. You have the right to be notified of the decision. Management has an obligation to meet with you prior to proposing discipline, and you have a right to have Steward present at that meeting. Please keep in mind that **Chapter 68 Leaders and its Steward Cadre** is always available to help members. If the issue you need assistance with is out of scope for the Union, we'll get you the resources you need to resolve your problem.*

NTEU WORKING FOR YOU



Why a Paycheck Checkup? Play it Safe:

With the recent tax law changes, it's even more critical we review our tax situations and check our withholding as soon as possible to prevent a tax surprise when we file in 2019. Under-withholding may subject you to an underpayment penalty, so play it safe, and review your tax situation now.

- The Tax Cuts & Jobs Act passed in December 2017 increased the standard deduction, removed personal exemptions, increased the child tax credit, limited or discontinued certain deductions and changed the tax rates and brackets.
- These changes may affect the amount of taxes withheld from your paycheck as well as the taxes you owe.
- If you are being over-withheld (which means so much is taken out of your paycheck that you may end up with a larger than usual refund), you may want to reduce your withholding amount. This resulted in having more in your take-home pay in 2018.
- Everyone's tax and financial situation is different. We encourage you to check if the right amount is being withheld from your paycheck during 2019 -- whether you want to avoid an unexpected tax bill, thoughtfully increase your take-home pay, or better manage the amount of your expected refund when you file your 2019 return.
- If you follow the recommendations regarding your withholding from a reliable source like the Withholding Calculator or your tax professional, please keep records to show that you did along with your other tax records.

Like all taxpayers, if you don't withhold enough taxes at the federal level, you may have to pay a tax penalty. But remember as an IRS employee, you might face disciplinary action for an Employee Tax Compliance violation. To see if you're having the correct amount of federal taxes withheld, it's important for you to use the Withholding Calculator on IRS.gov. As with all tax related record keeping, be sure to print and keep the results the Withholding Calculator provides.

Before using the Withholding Calculator, get a copy of your most recent pay stub and tax return. Remember, your pay stub is available through the Employee Personal Page. • Go to the IRS.gov Withholding Calculator page.

NTEU WORKING FOR YOU



I was approached by an NTEU member regarding an annual performance review. The NTEU member requested we file a grievance pertain to this evaluation. I originally reviewed the current and past evaluations.

After doing this, we determined the member had the right to file a grievance. We then requested a roll up of all the review done during the current year. While waiting for this material we discussed the review and conditions that applied in this situation. It was explained the grievant had missed quite some time out of work. When the employee returned the front-line manager and lead did not provide this employee with opportunity to refresh their skills, review the emails in detain, nor did they explain any significant or important changes in the ongoing procedures. There were in fact several major changes which the member was negatively criticized for. This criticism also applied to a situation in which the member knew a mistake had been made and reported it. The grievant had to go through a bi-monthly meeting due to these issues.

This individual experienced several traumatic events in their life. These circumstances are known to cause medical and psychological issues; These issues were presented as part of our argument. It was transparent that management did not consider any events that affect people ability to focus or concentrate not including other issues many of us have.

In the response, all the managerial comments were put into an Excel worksheet. Them we developed a response to each comment. This evaluation dealt with the management or administrative potions of the review.

We ended up in a Step 2 hearing pertaining to the grievance process. At the hearing, we professionally reviewed all the comments in a summary fashion while offering copies of the detailed response. We did this as the comments to be discussed would be lengthy and take considerable time. Additionally, by doing this we created an evidentiary document that could not be denied at any further stage in this process. It is an evidentiary document.

The department manager and labor relations individual reviewed all the comments Within the prescribed time frame that is permitted for a response the response was our comments were valid and succinct. The employee ended with a perfect review commensurate with the grieving's prior evaluations.

During this entire process records were kept and or created by the grievant, shared with me, reviewed and analyzed to present this case.

Always keep a log as to events that occur, reply to any comments you believe are inappropriate or incorrect. These logs will help you have a great opportunity to prevail in a grievance as opposed to no documents at all. If at any time there is a witness or witnesses to these vents ask them for a statement, see if they want their names on or off the statement and see if they are willing to step forward at an appropriate time. Many employees feel intimidated by going through this process.

The more individual who exercise their rights will encourage many others. This process would provide caution signs to management to act the way they do.

Mike McDonald, NTEU Chapter 68 Steward

NTEU WORKING FOR YOU



P.O.W.E.R. - Each NTEU member contributes to positive change and progress in the workplace, and in that spirit, People Organized to Win Employee Rights - is one of the primary ways for NTEU to gather information from chapter 68 members about their legislative efforts to get them involved!

NTEU works to ensure that all Chapter 68 members are tuned in to real time legislative updates. We also want to ensure that members can be contacted at a moment's notice and are responding accordingly on NTEU's legislative calls to action.

In the first quarter of 2019, our chapter's grassroots legislative efforts included participation in letter writing campaign especially crucial in today's federal employee workplace environment and the top 3 issues on which members sent letters were:

- ★ Asking Congress to re-open the government and for federal employees to be paid on time and to receive a pay raise.***
- ★ Asking Congress to pay Federal Employees.***
- ★ Asking Congress to oppose proposed cuts to take-home pay and retirement.***

I will continue to send these letter updates out every quarter, so you can see the progress your chapter is making. If you have not done so already, I am asking that you personally engage and empower our membership today by taking action on the issues that affect your pay, benefits and agency funding.

Please note, that you may email your members of Congress while onsite through NTEU's Legislative Action Center as long as you are on your own time and use a personal email address. And, remember, you can always use your personal device to share your thoughts with Congress. See what you can do! Visit NTEU.org Action Center

Every effort you make, large or small, to increase the number of letters being sent to Congress from your chapter matters and can make all the difference.

You have a Choice: Shrink with Fear or Soar with Courage.

***Respectively yours,
Nell Arndt, NTEU Chapter 68 Legislative Coordinator***



NTEU Chapter 68

2019 Labor Recognition Cookout

TUESDAY, JUNE 4



*Cafe Function Rooms
and Courtyard*

*11:00am-1:30pm &
4:30pm-7:00pm*

**ASL:
To Be Determined*

FREE for NTEU Members:

Choice of hot dog, hamburger, cheeseburger, chicken sandwich or vegetarian burger, with choice of side salad, cookie and a bottled water.

DEADLINE TO RESERVE A TICKET IS WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

Members: Please email NTEU Chapter 68 with your sandwich choice to reserve a ticket.

Non-Members: Please email Gary Karibian at the NTEU office to schedule an appointment to purchase a ticket.

Article 8 Section 3B allows 1 hour of administrative time to attend this event, **you must request the time from your manager in advance.**

Lunch & Learn

with NTEU National Executive Vice President

JIM BAILEY

Chapter 68 invites you to a meet and greet with
an informal discussion

June 5, 2019

11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Café Function Rooms 223 & 224

**Complimentary Snacks
will be provided**



NTEU
The National Treasury Employees Union

Chapter 68

****Space is limited****

Please RSVP by May 31st

Email nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov
Call (978) 783-8426 or visit us in
Room 1106



UNITED BENEFITS

Hosted by NTEU Chapter 68

Invites Members and Non-members

June 3rd, 5th and 6th
Schedule Your Appointment

Benefits and Retirement Counseling

Retirement Calculations and Package Assistance
TSP, FEGLI, FEHB, FERS, CSRS

Café Function Room 223 & 224

Please request 1 hour of Admin time

Article 36—Section 11—Subject to workload considerations the Employer may grant an employee up to a total of four (4) hours excused absence per calendar year for the purposes of attending a health benefits fair, reviewing health benefits information and materials, receiving financial counseling, and seeking supplemental retirement counseling. Except for excused absence for retirement planning, as provided for in Article 21, no other administrative time shall be authorized for general benefit counseling.

Jim Ragan—256.312.3015
jim@unitedbenefits.com

Karen Ragan—256.312.3016
karen@unitedbenefits.com

Retirement Planning

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) and Medicare



Planning to retire in next 5 years?

- FEHB in Retirement:
 - Eligibility
 - Government Contribution
 - Open Season and Qualifying Events
- A, B, C, & Ds of Medicare:
 - Medicare Eligibility
 - How and When to Enroll
 - Cost



**BlueCross
BlueShield.**

Federal Employee Program.

CROSS POINT - Tower 3, 9th floor Conference Room

Date: Wednesday, April 24th

Times: 12:00 PM and 12:30 PM

ANDOVER - Café Function Room 224

Date: Thursday, April 25th

Times: 11:30 AM, 12:00 PM and 12:30 PM

5:30 PM, 6:00 PM and 6:30 PM

NTEU members only

For questions, please contact NTEU office at nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov
or call 978-783-8426



	6	7	4		9		3	
		8		1		4		9
				8			5	
	9			3			6	7
		1	6		8	9		
7	8			9			1	
	3			6				
8		2		4		6		
	7		8		3	5	4	

**Please stop by the Union office for Sudoku Solution.*

Chapter 68 Officers

Gary Karibian, President, (978)783-8425

Maria Zangari, Vice President, (978)783-8423

Alan Clark, Secretary, (978)783-9636

Nellie Batista, D/S Chief Steward & Treasurer (978)783-8424

Rob MacFarlane, N/S Chief Steward & Executive Coordinator, (978)783-8426

Nell Arndt, Membership Trustee & Legislative Coordinator, (978)783-9268

Barbara Thomas(Doumaney), Membership Trustee, (978)783-8426

Bob Harrington, National Vice President (District 9), (978)783-8426

Union Office located at ANSC Stop 935, Room 1106

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4186 Ballardvale Station Andover, MA 01810

Chapter Website: www.nteuch68.org

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68

NTEU website: www.nteu.org Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/NTEUNational



Happy Easter...

Gary, Maria, Alan, Nellie, Rob, Nell, Barbara & Bobby