

The Guardian

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I Belong Because...

I Belong Because there's strength in numbers. I belong because even in tough times, our dedication does not waver and we belong to an elite group of citizens who chose public service. Our daily work is why the United States has the best civil service in the world.

I belong to the federal workforce because I decided that serving our country was a noble goal. We keep it safe and healthy. We protect our financial systems and assist taxpayers. We feed schoolchildren and safeguard intellectual property rights. I belong to a group of like-minded people who see value in the mission of each of the 31 agencies where NTEU represents employees.

There is value in belonging and coming together around shared values and goals. And that is why I belong to NTEU. Our civil service is the best in the world because of the rights and benefits organized federal employees have fought for and won.

At NTEU we have a goal of working together on behalf of federal employees. The belief that we are stronger together and the understanding that we can accomplish more collectively than we can individually draws together a diverse group of employees. NTEU members come from different federal agencies and do different types of work but we all have the same core value: that federal employees should be treated with dignity and respect.

That simple dictate has been consistent throughout our rich history. It draws employees to the union and encourages active participation. NTEU members of today and yesterday—people who decided that “I Belong” was an opportunity to make a difference—have fueled positive and lasting changes for the federal workforce.

I want to thank all those who belong to NTEU. Our members stand tall and stand together. Our contributions to our union have a ripple effect that is felt in our workplaces, at our agencies, by the public we serve and across the world. Thank you.

NTEU Working For You





A Day's Work...

What Every Employee Needs to Know About Requesting Storm Leave

Employees have a contractual right to administrative storm leave, per Article 36 Section 5 and 15-B of the 2019 National Agreement. Below is a guideline of reasonable efforts to be made and to be tracked to show that you made reasonable efforts to report to work. Please keep a log of these efforts, and most importantly, please be sure to see a union steward upon returning to work with this information.

- ☼ Wake up early! Do not allow management any wiggle room! If you are supposed to be at work at 6am and your first call to management is at 5:55am, then there is no proof you woke up early and made reasonable efforts.
- ☼ Call the National Hotline at 1-866-743-5748. At the prompt, press '3' for the National Hotline, press '2' for campuses, then press '1' for the Andover Campus (to see if the building and shift (s) have been cancelled). Notate the time!
- ☼ Go outside and attempt to make it to work if you are able. If unable to make it, go inside, call your manager and explain your situation. If you get a voicemail, leave your number and request a call back. Notate this and the weather conditions.
- ☼ Make a second and third attempt and call in at each attempt!
- ☼ If your manager returns your call, explain your situation. Notate.
- ☼ If the street is not plowed when you attempt to go into work, notate the time it is plowed. Did a plow dam the end of your driveway?
- ☼ Are there alternative means of transportation?
- ☼ Can you shovel your driveway or do you have a plow driver?
- ☼ Do you live in an apartment complex, condo, etc. that is responsible for snow removal?
- ☼ Do you have any medical/physical conditions that would interfere with your reporting to work?
- ☼ Whoever is responsible for snow removal, notate the time that they arrive and complete the job.
- ☼ Keep track and notate what the TV/radio stations say about road conditions and local travel restrictions.
- ☼ Follow up with your manager. You need to make more than one reasonable effort to come into work. Notate every attempt.
- ☼ Record the type of vehicle you have, 2 or 4 wheel drive, distance of your commute and the depth of the snow.
- ☼ Pictures! Pictures! Pictures! ~ Do NOT make it your word against theirs. Document. Newspaper clippings etc... Lastly, when you return to work, see a union steward immediately with this information. We will be happy to assist you in requesting your snow administrative leave.



Stewards Working For You... Article 32 Annual Leave

Q: Can a manager force an employee to take their accrued leave? Or would we just give them the option of using his/her own accrued leave, LWOP, or AWOL? A: Nothing in regulation, IRS policy in IRM 6.630.1, Absence and Leave or the 2019 CBA, allows managers to force employees to use their accrued annual leave; employees may request LWOP or AWOL.

Q: Are employees automatically entitled to advanced annual leave if they meet all of the requirements, despite the fact that the first sentence says that the granting of advanced annual leave is "discretionary"? A: From a policy perspective, there is nothing in law, regulation, IRS policy, or the contract, that entitles employees to advanced annual leave. Per Article 32, Subsections 6D and 8, the IRS has agreed to "make every reasonable effort to grant employee requests for advanced annual leave consistent with workload and staffing needs." However, if it is determined that the employee's services are necessary, the leave request can be denied.

Q: Does any advanced annual leave have to be paid back before more advanced annual leave is approved? A: Yes, if the employee has an outstanding balance of forty (40) hours of advanced annual leave. In accordance with Article 32, subsection 6.A., an employee cannot have an outstanding balance of more than forty (40) hours of advanced annual leave. An exception to the forty (40) hour limitation may be made per Article 32, subsection 6.B., if the employee must be absent from work either due to (1) a serious health condition of the employee or (2) to care for a family member, as defined in Exhibit 33-1, with a serious health condition. Article 32, subsection 6.C., states that as annual leave is earned by the employee, the earned annual leave will be used to repay any outstanding advanced annual leave balance, or the employee may repay any outstanding balance with a cash payment.

Q: Is there a cap on the amount of advanced annual leave that can be given for a serious health condition?

A: The employee cannot be granted more advanced annual leave than would be earned during the remainder of the leave year or for the remainder of the period during which the employee will be employed.

Q: Can advanced annual leave be denied based on a reasonable determination that an employee will not be present at work enough to earn it back during the leave year? A: Yes, it can be denied if the employee does not meet the requirements provided in Article 32, subsection 6A. Subsection 6A7 states the advanced leave will be approved if the employee is expected to return to work after having used the leave. Per Article 32, Section 8, if it is determined that the employee's services are necessary, the leave request can be denied. While advanced annual leave can be granted so long as the employee is expected to return to work after having used the leave, there is no requirement that the leave must be "paid back" during the same leave year it is used.

Q: May an employee request advanced annual leave for vacation? A: Yes, up to 40 hours of advanced annual leave can be granted for vacation or for any other reason so long as the advanced annual leave balance does not exceed 40 hours. Per Article 32, subsection 6D, the Employer shall make every reasonable effort to grant employee requests for advanced annual leave consistent with workload and staffing needs, subject to the requirements in subsection 6A. However, per Article 32, Section 8, if it is determined that the employee's services are necessary, the leave request can be denied.

NTEU WORKING FOR YOU.





A Day in the Life of a Federal Employee

It's time to rethink advocacy. It's not a once a year, during the upcoming annual NTEU Legislative Conference on the Hill. It's not just when the members of congress are in session, and it's not only during the Spring or Summer recesses. Legislative Advocacy is a year-long activity. It's about building relationships and telling our stories to the Legislators about "A Day in the Life of a Federal Employee."

During the legislative interim, Legislators are back in their home districts. So, what does this mean to a federal employee? It means we have multiple opportunities to interact and visit one-on-one and educate them on "A Day in the Life of a Federal Employee."

You may have heard that a lot of legislation impacting federal employee's livelihoods are decided outside of the legislative session, when legislators are meeting with their constituents and listening to their ideas and concerns. This is true!

How can you influence legislators and help them understand that their decisions impact federal employees across the states? Meeting face-to-face and sharing your a day in the life of a federal employee story can be more impactful than you realize. Legislators share stories they hear from constituents just like you—stories about mediocre pay raises, higher pension contributions and lack of resources to do your daily job.

Upon meeting with legislators we know where they stand for and deliver for federal employees on issues such as pay, pension and union rights. We voice your concerns. We say "thank you" for protecting our backs. After all, Legislators love to see the positive impact of their work; supporting legislation for decent pay raises, crunching "bills" to change your pension, and keeping your union rights. We speak up, speak out and stand up for you everyday. We have a loud voice!

With that said, NTEU's legislative advisory committee set the legislative landscape for federal employees and recommended four priority issues that are driving our chapter's legislative efforts this year; Improving Pay, Preserving and Enhancing Employee Benefits, Ensuring a Fair Workplace, and Securing Agency Missions. These are the issues that NTEU is sharply focused on this year and is on the front lines of the fight for you. Believing that we can and will make a difference, large or small, every day is a crucial stepping stone to the avenue of change in "A Day in a Federal Employee Life."

Respectively yours,

Nell Arndt, Chapter 68 Legislative Coordinator





People Organized to Win Employee Rights



POWER—People Organized to Win Employee Rights—The goal of the P.O.W.E.R. program is to strengthen chapter 68 legislative efforts and to engage chapter members in grassroots activity throughout the year. As part of POWER, chapter 68 leaders contact their elected officials, hold voter registration drives, conduct letter-writing campaigns, get members to vote, and hold other events that encourage NTEU members to become more politically active.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the top 3 issues on which chapter 68 members sent letters were:

- * **Cosponsoring the FAIR Act, a bill which would provide federal employees with a 3 % pay increase for calendar year 2019.**
- * **The Public Service Deserves Public Respect campaign, to help protect Pay, Retirement, and Union Rights.**
- * **Opposing proposed cuts to take-home pay and retirement.**

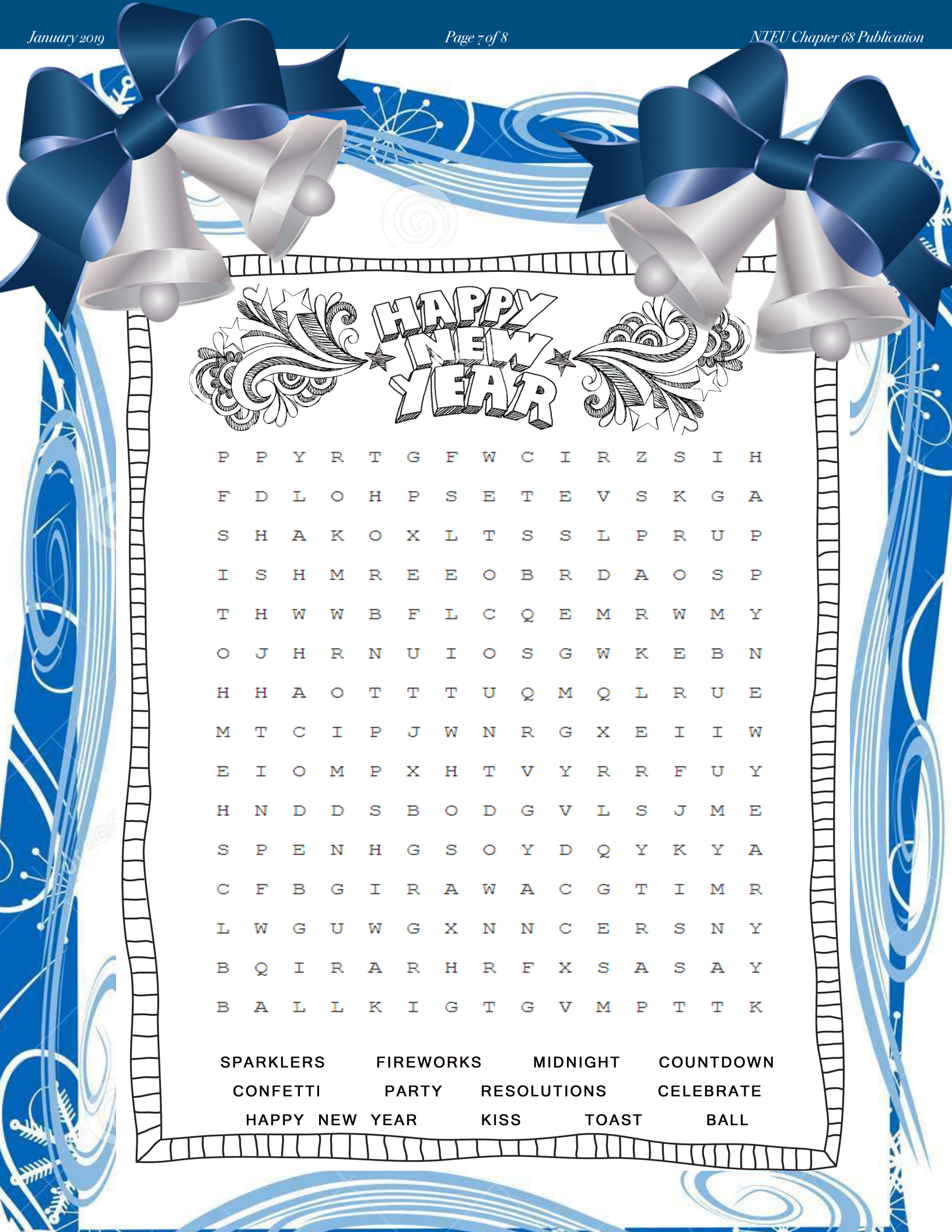
I will continue to send these letter updates out every quarter, for you to see the progress your chapter is making. If you have not done so already, I am asking that you personally engage and empower your membership today by educating them about legislation that impacts them and how they can take action.

Please share this information with your members and ask them to [take action](#) on the issues that affect their 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.

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.

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





**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**

P	P	Y	R	T	G	F	W	C	I	R	Z	S	I	H
F	D	L	O	H	P	S	E	T	E	V	S	K	G	A
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| SPARKLERS | FIREWORKS | MIDNIGHT | COUNTDOWN |
| CONFETTI | PARTY | RESOLUTIONS | CELEBRATE |
| HAPPY NEW YEAR | KISS | TOAST | BALL |



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*Happy New Year....Gary, Maria, Alan,
Nellie, Rob, Nell, Barbara, Bobby*

From Our Families To Yours