



# THE GUARDIAN



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In 1990 I joined the US Coast Guard and served on two different cruisers. One was entitled a buoy ship and the In was a medium endurance cutter. I was stationed in Kodiak, Alaska and Astoria Oregon.

My assignment was an engineer and serviced the engines of these vessels. Because of a serious traumatic injury, I could no longer serve in the US Coast Guard. After the Coast Guard, I was informed that the IRS was hiring employees to work in the Andover Campus. My application was accepted and I was first assigned to RPS,RIQ,COLLECTIONS, Exam, AUR and now I am back in Exam. I have completed 25 years of service at the IRS. Including my US Coast Guard employment, I have worked for the government for 29 years.

I joined the NTEU on my first week of training. I am very glad I did that because over my career, I have been bullied and harassed several times. NTEU assisted me in filing an EDI complaint. The EDI complaint is based on bullying and harassment. First, I had to speak with NTEU Chief Steward, who assisted me with this call. Next, an IRS DM was assigned to investigate my claims. My claim was the third filed against a front-line manager. I was interviewed by the DM. During the interview I expressed how aggressive this front-line manager was in bullying and harassing me. The night involved was a Friday night. I reside in Lynn Massachusetts. I was on the way to the nurse's office with a NTEU steward when the manager got involved. She had the nurse bring a wheel chair to me and I was taken by ambulance to a local hospital. The NTEU steward that was with me knew I lived in Lynn. The NTEU steward called the hospital to determine if I was still a patient. The NTEU steward went to the hospital at the end of their tour of duty to drive me to Lynn and was going to arrange to bring my car to Lynn the following day. I was discharged just before the steward arrived and a family member brought me home.

My primary care physician advised to me to stay out of work for 7 days. I did call the steward and thanked them for their efforts. When I met with the DM, I informed him that there were witnesses to the events that had occurred. The DM spoke to that person and that person reported to me that he informed the DM as to what had transpired. This person was the same steward who and helped me out on his own volition. The steward even informed me that the steward had told the DM that this front-line manager should be removed. The next day we had another manager.

Without being an NTEU member I have no idea as to who would have helped me, or how I would have accomplished what I have. I learned throughout this process that many employees are afraid to bring EDI complaints as they will have a target on their back. I had the same phobic feelings. However, after I did this I feel it was absolutely the right thing to do. This happened three years ago and I do not have a target on my back.

I am cognizant that there is harassment and bullying going on in this building. I encourage anyone who is encountering these difficulties to speak to NTEU, join NTEU, and get the assistance and support to have your concerns addressed.

Sincerely,

Don Buzun, Proud NTEU Member



Please share your I Belong NTEU story with us @ [nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov](mailto:nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov)

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**UNION UNITED IS NEVER DIVIDED!**

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

This year's 2019 membership drive will run from **March 31** through **September 28 2019**.

**A UNITED VOICE IS HARD TO IGNORE!  
THIS IS WHAT UNITY LOOKS LIKE**



When you join, you add your voice to the tens of thousands of federal employees fighting to protect our pay, workplace rights and retirement. Your support also empowers us at the bargaining table to secure new and improved programs and benefits in our workplace. **JOIN US**, so we can do more for you. Come see us in the **Union Office** or see your area **Steward** for assistance.

It's a challenging time for federal workers. Join **today**. We've got you covered.

**\*\*\*Campaign Rules available at the Union Office\*\*\***



### Article 40: Unacceptable Performance

Many employees struggle with performance related issues each year at the Andover Campus. If this happens to you, it's important to know what your rights are, and what management's procedures are to deal with any perceived drops in performance. Fortunately, this is all covered under Article 40 in our NTEU/IRS National Agreement. Article 40 Section 1D states that if an employee's performance is determined to be unacceptable in one or more critical job elements, an action plan will be put into place. The action plan is defined within the subsection of the article as a "written plan to the employee, including but not limited to suggestions as to how the employee can improve his/her performance, the type of assistance the Employer will provide, and instructions on ways the employee can be expected to raise his/her performance to an acceptable level".

The article also states that any meeting between an employee and the supervisor or other management official during which the principal topic of discussion is action or potential action based on unacceptable performance, the employee is entitled to be accompanied by a Union Steward.

If management determines that there has not been an improvement in performance after the action plan, their next step could be to issue a PIP (Performance Improvement Plan), also known as an "Opportunity period". Article 40 Section 2 defines this process. The PIP is to be issued to the employee in a letter. The letter must contain an identification of the critical job elements and performance standards for which performance is unacceptable. It must also contain advice as to what the employee must do to bring performance up to an acceptable level, a statement that the employee has a reasonable period of time - never less than 60 days - to bring performance back up to an acceptable level, and a description of what the Employer will do to assist the employee to improve the allegedly unacceptable performance during the PIP.

If there is an improvement in performance, but the performance is determined to still be less than acceptable, management should extend the PIP to allow more time to improve. If the performance remains the same, or drops further, the next step is usually a "proposal letter". This is when management will propose to terminate the employee based on their "unacceptable performance". The reason that it is only a proposal, and not a final determination, is because the employee has Union rights. After visiting with your Union representative, they will file an "oral reply request" on your behalf and also request all of the evidence relied upon by the agency when drafting the proposal. Your NTEU representative will then usually have about a month to prepare your defense. They will pour over all of your evaluative reviews, consult with knowledgeable and technical chapter representatives and allies to see if errors charged were done so correctly. Any they will draft your "oral reply". The oral reply is a written response to the proposal letter that the NTEU rep will have drafted ahead of time. It will be presented by your representative to management. Also present will be a court stenographer, and a Labor Relations Specialist. After the oral reply is presented, we will wait for the stenographer's transcript to become available. The NTEU rep will review the transcript for errors. Once we have approved the transcript, then we wait for management's final decision.

If you are ever contacted by management about performance issues, your first step should be to contact your NTEU representative!

Sincerely, Rob MacFarlane, N/S Chief Steward





**"NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT." ELEANOR ROOSEVELT**

**Your Right to be Treated with Respect. You've got rights in the workplace.** As a federal employee and NTEU member you have rights provided by law and negotiated in your contract. All of these rights are enforced for you daily by NTEU.

**You have a right to:**

- ★ Participate in meaningful ways in decisions affecting your work life.
- ★ NTEU representation during investigatory interviews that may lead to discipline.
- ★ Be treated with courtesy and tact.
- ★ Training to effectively do your job.
- ★ Have your job expectations explained to you.
- ★ NTEU assistance and representation in a dispute with your agency.
- ★ Freedom from coercion in exercising your rights.
- ★ Take part fully in the political process away from the job.
- ★ Work in a safe and healthy environment.
- ★ Join NTEU and take full advantage of your union membership.

Here's a closer look at some of those rights:

**The right to representation in an investigatory interview that may lead to discipline.** Any questioning of an employee in the bargaining unit by a representative of the agency in connection with an investigation, including an agent of your agency's Inspector General office, entitles you to have an NTEU representative present if you reasonably believe that the questioning or interview may result in disciplinary action against you and you request representation.

**The right to due process when faced with an adverse action.** In general, this means advance notice of the specific allegations against you, the right to review the evidence supporting the allegations, and opportunity to respond to the allegations, a final written decision following your response, and the right to challenge an adverse final decision. The Merit Systems Protection Board stated, "Due process is there for the whistleblower, the employee who belongs to the 'wrong' political party, the reservist whose periods of military service are inconvenient to the boss, the scapegoat, and the person who has been misjudged base on faulty information. Due process is a constitutional requirement and a small price to pay to ensure the American people receive a merit-based civil service rather than a corrupt spoils system."

**The right to a workplace free of bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment.** NTEU works to prevent such problems in the workplace through prevention and vigilance but if such situations do occur, your NTEU chapter knows what to do when these matters are brought to their attention. The NTEU-negotiated grievance procedure in your contract can not only help to stop the conduct but also ensure that the employee who is the target of such actions is protected from employment actions, such as poor appraisals or the denial of a deserved promotion.

**Our job is to help you be successful in your workplace and are treated with dignity and respect. We work to ensure that workplace rules that make sense for employees and taxpayers and your basic rights are protected and enforced to the fullest.**

**NTEU WORKING FOR YOU**



## Legislative Advocacy: Your Voice

*Chapter 68's legislative leaders advocate for you in ways that you may not realize and it works!*

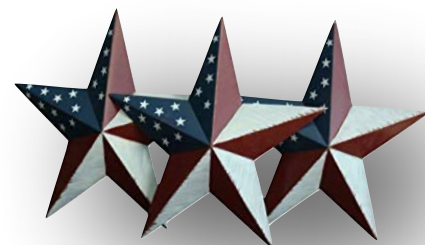
*How can a congressional inquiry help you? A Congressional inquiry is a "status check" of your claim conducted by your local senator or representative on your behalf. While requesting a congressional inquiry does not automatically guarantee that your claim will be revised or addressed any sooner, it won't negatively affect your inquiry.*

*Chapter legislative leaders can initiate a congressional inquiry on your behalf, we need to contact your local senator or representative's office to request that he or she look into where your inquiry stands. In your request, you should give a general overview of the circumstances surrounding your inquiry to chapter leaders.*

*By way of example, here's how the chapter's legislative team advocates for you everyday to improve your livelihoods:*

*An employee needed to go out on disability. She has completed the disability retirement paperwork and submitted it to personnel. She was told that it would be a year before they could get to her, unless she was designated as terminal. She couldn't wait a year for approval. She contacted NTEU Chapter 68 to see if they could assist. The Chapter contacted the office of the employee's Congressional Representative. Within a 24-hour turnaround, the employee was contacted by her Representative's office to assist in getting her request expedited. This wouldn't have happened without the relationship the chapter has built with its representatives in MA and NH. Just another reason why it's important to be a member of NTEU!*

### **NTEU WORKING FOR YOU.**





Let's Speak Up, Speak Out .... I Deserve a Pay Raise..  
 "1.9 was just a Fix! 2020 3.6!"

# NTEU CHAPTER 68

## Legislative Grassroots Contest

### April 1st - June 30th

PRIZES



It is imperative that Congress act to provide a pay raise for federal workers for 2020. Representative Connolly (D-VA) has introduced the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) pay H.R. 1073 calling for a 3.6% adjustment for 2020 for federal workers covered by the General Schedule and Wage Grade systems.



*Disclaimer: Do not use your government email. You can use your phone, personal email and home computer. You must be on your own time.*



#### Take these five steps to get your voice heard:

1. Visit NTEU.org and click on "Write Congress" in the Action Center.
2. Choose an action alert.
3. Enter your ZIP code.
4. A pre-populated message will appear that you can customize by clicking inside the text box. The message will automatically be sent to your representative(s).
5. Scroll down to sign your name, enter your contact information and click submit.

**You're done!**

**MAKE IT FASTER & EASIER TO TAKE ACTION**

Check the "Remember Me" box and Bookmark Action.NTEU.org.

Take action today for a better tomorrow.

Visit [NTEU.org](http://NTEU.org)



# 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.**





# 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**



# 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](mailto:nteu.chapter.68@irs.gov)  
Call (978) 783-8426 or visit us in  
Room 1106**



NTEU members save more. The union offers exclusive discounts on everything from phone service and oil changes to wholesale club memberships. [Visit NTEU.org](http://NTEU.org) **Benefits**

**25% off grocery store prices\* every day.**



(Before you even clip a coupon.)

## NEW MEMBER OFFERS

BJ's Perks Rewards®

**Now \$50\*\***

**Save \$60**

on a 12-Month BJ's Membership with BJ's Easy Renewal®

- Earn 2% cash back on most BJ's purchases†

BJ's Inner Circle®

**Now \$25\*\***

**Save \$30**

on a 12-Month BJ's Membership with BJ's Easy Renewal



## RENEWING MEMBER OFFERS

BJ's Perks Rewards

**Now \$80\*\*** **Save \$30**

on a 12-Month BJ's Membership with BJ's Easy Renewal

- Earn 2% cash back on most BJ's purchases†
- Plus, **1 BONUS MONTH** = 13 total months

BJ's Inner Circle

**Now \$40\*\*** **Save \$15**

on a 12-Month BJ's Membership with BJ's Easy Renewal

- Plus, **1 BONUS MONTH** = 13 total months

MEMBERS OF NTEU CHAPTER 68 - ANDOVER, MASS.

THIS IS A LIMITED TIME ONLY SPECIAL OFFER available until June 28, 2019

SIMPLY COMPLETE THE APPLICATION AND MAIL IT WITH PAYMENT TO THE ADDRESS ON THE APP

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: BJ'S WHOLESALE CLUB  
THESE OFFERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN CLUB

All BJ's Memberships are subject to BJ's current Membership Terms, ask in-Club or go to [Bjs.com/terms](http://Bjs.com/terms).

\*25% savings is based on Member pricing on a basket of 100 national brand household staples, on an unpromoted unit-price basis, when compared to four leading grocery chains in our trade areas. For more information, visit [Bjs.com/25percentterms](http://Bjs.com/25percentterms).

**Membership Expiration and Renewals:** Your Membership expiration date is the last day of the month and year shown on your register receipts and on your "My Account" page on Bjs.com. Paid Memberships renewed within two months after expiration will be extended 12 months from the expiration date.

\*\*Offer may not be combined with other offers, not redeemable for cash, nontransferable and only good for new Members. Plus sales tax where applicable. Offer is contingent upon your enrolling in BJ's Easy Renewal, and you authorize BJ's to charge the debit/credit card first used at BJ's after accepting this offer, an annual recurring charge in the amount of the then-current Membership fee for all active Memberships on your account, plus tax where applicable, on the first day of the month your Membership expires. **Expires: 6/30/19.**

†BJ's Perks Rewards Members earn 2% cash back on most BJ's purchases. Cash back is in the form of electronic Awards issued in \$20 increments that are used at checkout at BJ's and expire 6 months from the date issued. Cash back can be requested in the form of a check prior to Awards expiring by contacting Member Care at 800-BJS-CLUB. My BJ's Perks® Program is provided by BJ's Wholesale Club, Inc. and its terms may change from time to time. Some exclusions may apply. Visit [Bjs.com/terms](http://Bjs.com/terms) for program terms.

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# MEMORIAL DAY

word scramble

BREVA \_\_\_\_\_

REIDP \_\_\_\_\_

GLAF \_\_\_\_\_

ECAPE \_\_\_\_\_

SETUAL \_\_\_\_\_

ROWLD \_\_\_\_\_

YUTD \_\_\_\_\_

DRSIOEL \_\_\_\_\_

TYBIREL \_\_\_\_\_

NOHRO \_\_\_\_\_

MAYR \_\_\_\_\_

FREIG \_\_\_\_\_

DAGUR \_\_\_\_\_

EPRADA \_\_\_\_\_

REYMOM \_\_\_\_\_

VIESL \_\_\_\_\_



## NTEU PARKING RAFFLE

Next drawing is for June and July

Enter by May 24th @ NTEU Union Office/Stop 935 Union Office # (978)783-8426

Website: [www.nteuch68.org](http://www.nteuch68.org) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68](http://www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

TOD: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_







# Blooming Buzz

## *Spring into action: Gardening Tips*

**1. Get an idea.** Is this going to be a vegetable garden? An herb garden? A flower garden? If you choose to grow flowers, do you want annuals, which you must replant each year but which give color most of the summer? Or do you prefer perennials, which have a shorter bloom time but come back year after year? You can mix any of the above—after all, it's your garden. Just one bit of advice: Start small. 'Tis better to succeed just a little, than to fail grandly.

**2. Pick a place.** Almost all vegetables and most flowers need about six hours of full sun each day. Spend a day in your chosen spot and watch how the sun moves across the space. It might receive more sun than you think. But don't despair if your lot is largely sunless; many plants tolerate shade. Check plant tags or ask the staff at your local garden center to find out how much sun a plant requires. Put the garden where you can't ignore its pleas for attention—outside the back door, near the mailbox, by the window you stare out when you dry your hair. Place it close enough to a water spigot that you won't have to drag the hose to the hinterlands.

**3. Clear the ground.** Get rid of the sod (grass) covering the area you plan to plant. If you want quick results, you can dig it out, but it's easier to smother it with newspaper. A layer of five sheets is usually thick enough; double that if your lawn is Bermudagrass or St. Augustine grass. Spread a 3-inch layer of compost (or combination of potting soil and topsoil) on the newspaper and wait. It'll take about four months for the compost and paper to decompose.

If you don't want to wait or if the area is covered with weeds, you're better off digging the sod out.

**4. Improve the soil.** Invariably, soil needs a boost. The solution is simple: organic matter. Add a 2- to 3-inch layer of compost, decayed leaves, dry grass clippings, or old manure. If you dig soil (see Step 5), till the organic matter into the soil. If you decide not to dig or are working with an established bed you can't dig, leave the organic matter on the surface and it will work its way into the soil in a few months.

**5. Dig or don't.** Digging loosens the soil so roots can penetrate more easily. But digging when the soil is too wet or too dry can ruin its structure. Dig only when the soil is moist enough to form a loose ball in your fist, but dry enough to fall apart when you drop it. Use a spade or spading fork to gently turn the top 8 to 12 inches of soil, mixing in the organic matter from Step 4. In vegetable gardens and beds of annual flowers, turn the soil only once a year in the spring before you plant.

**Fun Fact:** Do you know the difference between perennials and annuals? Well, perennial flowers are those that continue to grow year after year after remaining dormant throughout the winter. Examples of perennials are roses, daisies, sunflowers, Chinese lanterns, carnations, and many, many others. Annuals typically are planted in the spring and summer months, bloom for the season, and then die. Gardeners supplement perennial gardens with lively, colorful annuals. Annuals are also commonly used as borders and in containers and flower boxes to brighten up the landscape. **Happy planting!**



# HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY

Today We Celebrate Our Fallen Heroes

Remember and Honor



## CHAPTER 68 OFFICERS



**Gary Karibian, Chapter President, (978)783-8425**

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

**Alan Clark, Secretary, (978)783-9636**

**Noelia 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)783-9236**

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

**Robert Harrington, National Vice President Dist. 9, (978)783-8426**

**NTEU Union Office local at ANSC Stop 935, Room 1106**

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**Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68](https://www.facebook.com/NTEU-Chapter-68)**

**NTEU website: [www.NTEU.org](http://www.NTEU.org)**

**Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/NTEU/National](https://www.facebook.com/NTEU/National)**