

## White House Budget Calls for Pay, Benefits Cuts

The Trump administration used its 2019 budget blueprint to launch a full-scale assault on federal employees, with multiple proposals to freeze pay, cut retirement and health insurance benefits, reduce leave time and diminish due process rights.

It also includes vague but ominous ideas for tying raises strictly to performance ratings and one's occupation rather than giving across the board raises based on pay comparability and the rights of employees to bargain collectively.

"They say a president's budget is a statement of vision. If so, then this administration envisions a civil service that is based on political fealty, not merit; a weakened federal workforce; federal agencies that can't keep up with taxpayer demands; and more taxpayer services being delivered by for-profit corporations, not public servants," National President Tony Reardon said.

The reforms, many of which have been promoted by anti-union groups for years, won't happen unless Congress approves. This gives federal employees and their union representatives a chance to fend them off.

Overall, many of the ideas are based on distorted information and faulty premises about the federal workforce and each is a direct threat to paychecks, pensions and workplace fairness.

"I look forward to offering a fact-based rebuttal to these proposals, after which Congress and the American people will stand and defend our civil servants by giving them the tools and resources they need to do their jobs," Reardon said.

Freezing federal employee pay in 2019, as proposed, flies in the face of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act, a formula that says employees should get a 2.1 percent across the board raise next year, not including adjustments based on locality. NTEU is instead calling for a 3 percent across the board increase to help make federal salaries more competitive with the private sector.

The administration's budget also assumes that because most federal employees receive successful performance evaluations, the evaluation system is flawed. This is an offensive conclusion that ignores the possibility that most federal employees are skilled professionals who are commit-

ted to their work and their country.

As a result, the budget suggests scrapping the General Schedule and providing fewer within-grade step increases and more one-time performance-based incentives.

"In fact, the General Schedule has built-in provisions to reward good employees and deal with poor performers. The real problem is that many federal managers are not trained in their use, or simply decide not to use them, or Congress has not provided agencies with the funding to do so," Reardon added.

**"Why is it that after passing a massive tax cut for wealthy Americans, politicians go looking for savings on the backs of federal employees?"**

— NATIONAL PRESIDENT TONY REARDON

Over 10 years, the president's budget would slash approximately \$155 billion from federal employee retirement and health programs — a devastating effort to once again gouge federal employees in the name of deficit reduction.

"Why is it that after passing a massive tax cut for wealthy Americans, politicians go looking for savings on the backs of federal employees?" Reardon said.

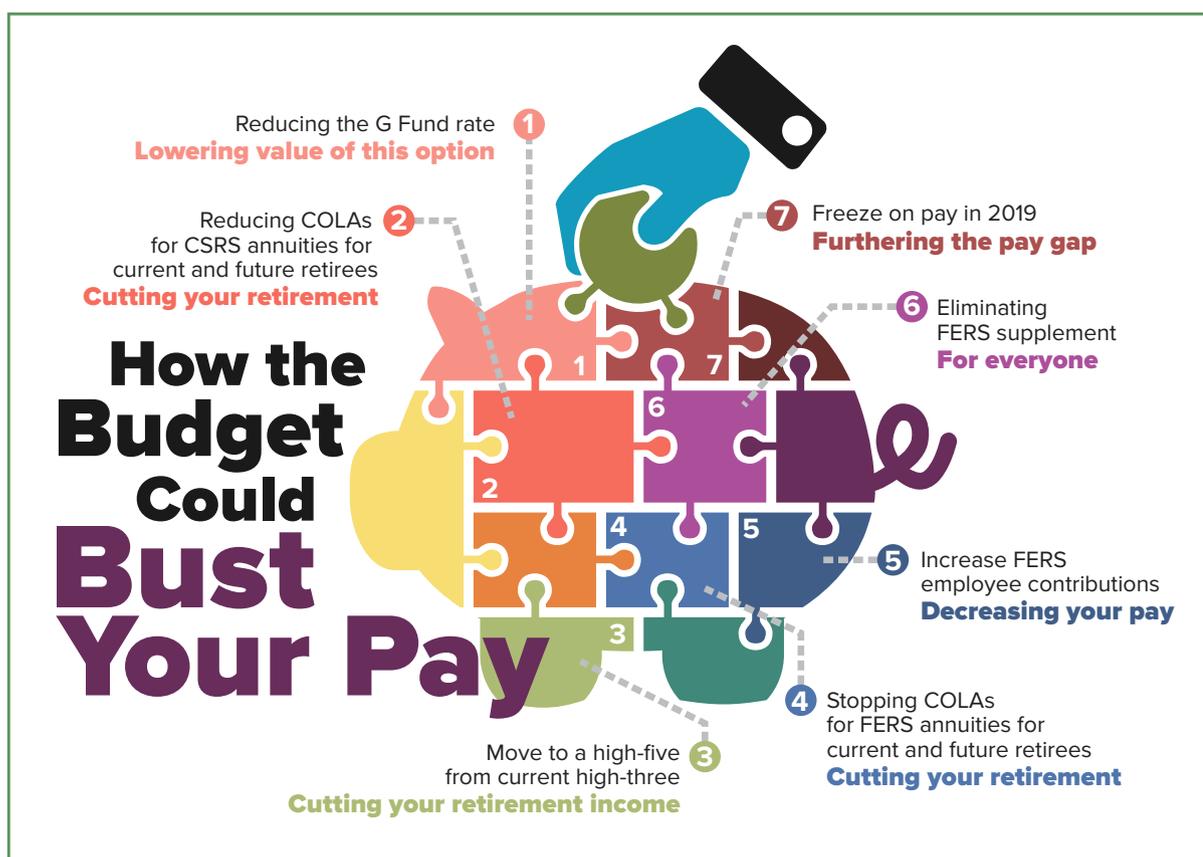
On health care, the president wants to lower the amount that the government contributes to certain Federal Employees Health Benefits Program insurance plans — leaving employees with higher premiums.

There are also recommendations to reduce workers' compensation benefits, lower the amount of leave time and discourage healthy labor-management relationships. The popular Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program would also be eliminated.

On top of all of that, the budget's stated goal is to reduce spending at most non-defense federal agencies, shrink the workforce and move more government work into the private sector, all of which would jeopardize agency missions and be a great disservice to taxpayers.

Fortunately, Congress beat the president to the punch by enacting a broad, two-year budget agreement that lifts the spending caps on non-defense agency funding even before his proposed 2019 budget was announced. With the agreement, Congress intends to remove the repeated shut-down threats for at least the next 18 months and return to a more normal process of regular appropriations bills for each agency.

"Congress can now get to work properly funding agencies for the remainder of the fiscal year and the next, instead of being mired in persistent threats of government shutdowns and the wasteful reliance on short-term continuing resolutions," Reardon said. 



# THE President's VIEW



*Tony*

**Anthony M. Reardon**  
National President

## Who is Protecting Your Money?

In the past few weeks, I have done the following: put gas in my car using a credit card, explored loans and other options for my son's college education, paid my bills from my checking account, worried that market volatility was impacting my attempts to save for retirement and started working on my tax return.

I suspect you have done similar financial work. They are common, everyday occurrences that Americans perform in the course of their daily lives.

opened in existing customers' names without their knowledge or consent.

As one CFPB employee put it: "We read the fine print because consumers often won't."

The days of keeping our money under the mattress are over, and we make full use of banks and credit unions. Our paychecks are directly deposited, our cash comes out of an ATM and our bills are paid using a bank check or through online banking. And we rarely give a second thought to the safety and security of that money.

That is because banks are regulated by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). Credit unions fall under the jurisdiction of the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

What does that mean for you? It means your money is insured against loss. If a bank or credit union fails—and they sometimes do—you will not lose the money you have deposited in that institution up to certain limits. It also means that your bank or credit union is checked for its financial soundness to help avoid failures. The success of these efforts can be summed up with one fact. Since the creation of the FDIC in the wake of

the Great Depression, not one single person has lost money that was deposited in an FDIC-insured bank.

There are NTEU members working on your behalf in one other important financial sector: investing. Money you set aside for your retirement in the Thrift Savings Plan or a 401(k) is invested in stocks, bonds and other securities.

Most of us don't pay that much attention to the fluctuating mix of investments that money managers use to improve our returns. Luckily for us, employees at the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission are on the job.

Their role is to make Wall Street and other exchanges fair for all investors and provide you and others with accurate information that helps you make decisions about how to use your money.

All these financial regulatory agencies face daunting challenges in doing their jobs. Big financial firms are constantly trying to weaken the agencies so they have less oversight of what they are doing. Questionable financial schemes may line their pockets at the expense of your retirement.

NTEU watches out for the interests of the employees who are committed to ensuring sound banking practices, fair investment policies and consumer protections.

So, the next time you use your credit card, read your TSP statement or write a check, think about these NTEU members who are on the job and have your best interests at heart.



While you are going about your day, you may not give much thought to the employees who are hard at work to protect your finances. But you should.

In financial regulatory agencies across the government, NTEU-represented employees are trying to stop scams, protect you from identity theft, protect investors and ensure the soundness of your bank or credit union.

These agencies and their employees—like lots of others—are facing significant challenges and threats to their jobs and their ability to do the work they were hired to do.

The one attracting the highest number of damaging proposals is also one of the newest federal agencies: the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Just six years old, it has continually drawn the ire of some in Congress since it opened its doors.

Right now, it is facing attempts to close it down, limit its funding and significantly change its enforcement work.

If you don't know much about this agency, here is a snapshot of what its employees do. They work with banks, credit card companies, and home mortgage and education lenders to help them provide clear and understandable language about their products so you know exactly what you are getting.

They investigate individual consumer complaints, so far more than 1 million of them, and they get you answers. Their efforts have resulted in nearly \$12 billion being returned to consumers. CFPB employees found the Wells Fargo scam, where new accounts were being



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To organize federal employees to work together to ensure that every federal employee is treated with dignity and respect.

—NTEU Mission

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## Fight Continues for Increased IRS Budget for New Tax Law



Months after Congress passed the largest overhaul of the tax code in 30 years, there is growing acceptance that the IRS will need extra funding and personnel to help implement it.

NTEU warned during the tax reform debate that the cash-strapped agency was about to see its workload increase significantly, and that without supplemental funding, customer service and enforcement would suffer.

As a result, there has been bipartisan support in Congress to increase funding for the IRS for the remainder of the 2018 fiscal year and into 2019. The appropriations committees have until March 23 to set spending levels for the rest of the current fiscal year, and NTEU is encouraging them to include additional funding for the IRS to use immediately.

Specifically, the agency has estimated that implementing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act would require an extra \$397 million. About 92 percent of the additional money would pay for upgrades to the IT systems, taxpayer assistance, education and outreach. The IRS, for example, will have to change about 450 tax products, much more than

during a normal filing season.

National President Tony Reardon submitted written testimony about the IRS funding issues for a hearing by the Senate Finance Committee in February.

“The importance of providing the IRS with additional funding to implement the tax law cannot be overstated,” President Reardon said. “Forcing the IRS to reallocate already limited resources from core taxpayer service and enforcement activities to implement the new tax law would further diminish its ability to carry out those activities.”

The added \$397 million would allow the IRS to hire 1,600 more full-time employees, including 1,000 more to respond to the 4 million additional phone calls and written taxpayer correspondence that the agency anticipates due to the new tax law.

### History shows the IRS estimate has merit.

In the two years following the major tax reforms of 1986, Congress provided the IRS with funding to hire 1,300 more people to handle the 14 percent increase in call volume as taxpayers and employers tried to understand the changes. But the focus on supplemental funding for tax reform should not overshadow the persistent funding and staffing shortages afflicting the agency’s other, regular duties.

In his testimony, Reardon said the administration’s 2019 proposed IRS budget — \$11.1 billion in base funding — is inadequate, especially after enduring more than \$900 million in cuts since 2010.

The White House budget blueprint, which many in Congress immediately dismissed as obsolete after the two-year budget agreement was signed in February, would cut IRS staffing

by more than 5,800 full-time employees from the 2017 levels, exacerbating the loss of 21,000 workers over the last eight years.

Depriving the IRS of adequate personnel and resources has severe consequences: With 4,000 fewer IRS professionals available to answer phones, service levels are predicted to drop from 75 percent in fiscal year 2018 to 47 percent in 2019. And cutting about 1,800 enforcement personnel means fewer revenue officers and revenue agents to collect taxes and fewer audits to catch tax cheats.

The IRS reports a tax gap of \$450 billion, which is taxes owed to the government but not yet collected. While the gap can never be completely eliminated, any reduction in the amount of uncollected taxes can help the government pay more of its bills.

“The importance of providing the IRS with additional funding to implement the tax law cannot be overstated.”

— NATIONAL PRESIDENT TONY REARDON

“NTEU strongly believes that only by providing the IRS with additional resources will the IRS be able to meet the rising workload level, stabilize and strengthen tax compliance and customer service programs, and allow the Service to address the federal deficit in a serious and meaningful way,” Reardon said. ☐

## Shutdown Becomes Groundhog Day For Federal Employees

It was a short-lived government shutdown, but it doesn’t mean it wasn’t disruptive.

The latest government shutdown sparked anxiety and confusion for federal employees in the early morning hours of Friday, Feb. 9, as employees waited to hear whether to report for — or resume — their work.

Government funding lapsed at midnight that Thursday night and into early Friday morning, but federal employees had to wait several more hours for Congress to pass and President Trump to sign the continuing resolution and then for the Office of Management and Budget to instruct federal agencies to reopen all government operations.

As of 8 a.m., ET, on Friday morning, when most federal employees on the East Coast were getting ready to report for work, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) still had an alert on its website stating that there was a lapse in appropriations.

“Do you stay home? Do you report to work to begin orderly shutdown procedures but prepare to work because the government may reopen? Or if you’re excepted, you once again work without knowing when you’ll be paid,” said National President Tony Reardon. “And then you have OPM encouraging agencies to

use workplace flexibilities — including telework — to transition employees back to work. What do you do?”

At around 9 a.m., President Trump signed the funding measure, providing funding through March 23 while Congress works to appropriate funding for federal agencies for the remainder of fiscal year 2018. A few minutes later, OMB issued the memo officially reopening the government.

“The worst part is that employees just went through this same rigmarole in January.”

— NATIONAL PRESIDENT TONY REARDON

It’s bad enough if you work 9 to 5, but some federal employees — including those at Customs and Border Protection and the IRS — work night and early morning shifts. Some non-excepted workers were placed into furlough status in the middle of their shifts and sent home.



“This may have been a ‘short duration’ shutdown, but it’s still confusing, stressful and a colossal waste of time and taxpayer dollars,” said Reardon “The worst part is that employees just went through this same rigmarole in January.”

The first government shutdown of 2018 lasted three days, with furloughed employees worried about both the potential loss to their paychecks as well as taxpayer services. An NTEU-supported provision added to the continuing resolution ensured all federal employees would be paid in full. ☐



# 2018 Legislative Conference



## Our Congressional Checklist

- ▶ Oppose cuts to take-home pay and retirement
- ▶ Cosponsor the FAIR Act
- ▶ Provide sufficient funding for IRS tax reform
- ▶ Support sufficient funding at the ports of entry
- ▶ Support a hiring surge of CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists
- ▶ Protect financial consumers
- ▶ Support the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act
- ▶ Oppose unfairly targeting federal employees
- ▶ Oppose any legislation that would harm the IRS and its operations
- ▶ Prevent wasting funds on the use of private tax collectors to collect federal taxes

## Reardon Pumps Up Event Attendees

“We do not get tired and we certainly never give up.”

That was the message National President Tony Reardon delivered to an energized crowd of 350 NTEU members who went to Capitol Hill last month to advocate for protecting federal employee pay, benefits and workplace rights.

It would have been easy for NTEU members to feel fatigued. The union’s annual Legislative Conference came just as Congress was down to the wire, debating the fifth continuing resolution since October. These negotiations would go late into the night on the second day of the conference, followed by a brief government shutdown in the early morning hours on the final day.

But tired is not a word NTEU members know.

“Just like Americans across the country, our level of activism has skyrocketed,” said Reardon.

For three days, NTEU members from across the country and 32 different federal agencies and departments drove home the message that federal employees do vital work for the country and don’t deserve the constant attacks. They

logged hundreds of visits with congressional offices to educate members of Congress and their staff on the union’s priority issues and the federal employee perspective.

NTEU’s legislative focus for this year is supporting a fair pay increase, opposing cuts in retirement and health care programs, protecting collective bargaining and due process rights, and fighting for adequate funding to help agencies accomplish their missions. This agenda was set earlier this year by a Legislative Advisory Committee made up of NTEU members from various agencies.

Delegates to the conference weren’t the only NTEU members who made their voices heard. During the week of the Legislative Conference, members from around the country participated in the union’s call-in campaign and added their voices to those of their fellow NTEU members on Capitol Hill.

“Every NTEU member—no matter where you are—has the power to make a difference,” said Reardon. “We are stronger when we speak out in a unified voice. That’s what unions are all about, and that is what NTEU is all about.”

## SPECIAL THANKS

To all congressional members who attended this year’s Legislative Conference as a guest speaker and have a 100% voting record in support of NTEU issues:



Sen. Tim Kaine  
Virginia



Sen. Mazie Hirono  
Hawaii





# Salary Cuts, Funding Issues Create Declining Morale

A new survey of NTEU chapter leaders from around the country reflects a continued decline in workplace morale and an ever-growing belief that their federal agencies are being deprived of the resources they need to serve taxpayers.

The survey results were announced during the Legislative Conference and published by multiple media outlets as part of their coverage of NTEU's 2018 agenda.

"What strikes me about these survey results is how federal employees are shouldering anxiety, both for their personal well-being and that of the nation," National President Tony Reardon said.

The online survey conducted in January was answered by 730 chapter leaders from every NTEU-represented agency.

- Here are some key findings:
- ▶ 82 percent say morale is declining or poor, up from 81 percent last year
  - ▶ 82 percent say their biggest personal fear is a cut to their pay and benefits
  - ▶ 74 percent say that insufficient funding is the biggest challenge facing their agency, up from 65 percent last year
  - ▶ 84 percent say the funding crisis has caused

- a staffing shortage where they work
- ▶ 83 percent say losing retirement benefits would make them feel that their public service was not respected or valued
- ▶ 90 percent say they wished Congress and the public would understand that federal employees are middle class workers facing the same economic challenges as other Americans

**"...federal employees are shouldering anxiety, both for their personal well-being and that of the nation."**

—NATIONAL PRESIDENT TONY REARDON

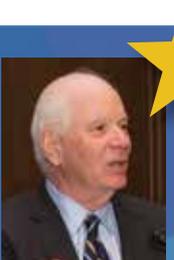
Reardon discussed the findings in greater detail with 13 reporters during his annual media briefing on the first day of the conference. The briefing included reporters from *The Washington Post*, *Politico*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Federal News Radio* and *Government Executive*, among others.

The survey results provide a distressing view of what life is like on the front lines of our federal agencies: shrinking workforces, heavier workloads, paychecks that don't stretch as far as they used to, less job security and an overarching concern that the taxpaying public will be the ones who suffer the most.

"When federal employees talk about low morale and budget cuts, it's not just about them; it's about all of us," Reardon said. "They know better than anyone what happens when a government agency starved of funding and personnel falls behind in its daily duties. The damage is real."

Reardon has urged NTEU members to share their workplace stories directly with their members of Congress.

"Federal workers draw a direct correlation between poor working conditions and the corrosive effect on public services," Reardon said. "They chose a career of public service because they believe in national security, public health and economic growth, and they are understandably frustrated when those important government missions suffer." ☐



**Sen. Ben Cardin**  
Maryland



**Sen. Chris Van Hollen**  
Maryland



**Rep. Val Demings**  
Florida





## With Shutdown Looming, Candid Talk from Senators

The first of its kind at an NTEU Legislative Conference, the *Senate Salute* was a chance for members to hear directly from senators and ask questions in a more informal setting. Hundreds of NTEU members gathered at the top floor of the Senate Hart building to hear from Sens. Tim Kaine, D-Va., and Mazie K. Hirono, D-Hawaii.

The event was held as yet another possible government shutdown loomed with funding running out at midnight that day.

National President Tony Reardon welcomed Kaine and praised his 100 percent voting record on NTEU issues and staunch defense of collective bargaining rights. Kaine was met with a standing ovation as he took to the podium.

“Gathered in this room today is the backbone of our country. And I know your issues, because I know you — my constituents — are federal employees who are tired of being the punching bags. And as we’re deep into the threat of another shutdown, it’s a true sign of dysfunction our country is facing,” the senator said.

While candidly detailing the frustration he has heard, Kaine spoke to the shared anxiety felt by federal employees as their paychecks and benefits continue to hang in the balance with each threat of a shutdown. He outlined NTEU issues he strongly supports in the Senate: federal employee due process rights, staffing issues and finding ways to compromise on a budget resolution.

Kaine closed by stating, “Government is not the problem — government is part of the solution. We need improvement and to foster risk-taking.”

Hirono then took to the stage to offer similar words of solidarity to NTEU members and federal workers across the nation. She boasts a stellar voting record on federal employee and overall labor issues.

The importance of union membership is something Hirono holds dear, opening her remarks by detailing her family’s remarkable journey to America and the union membership that granted her mother job security and benefits, and gave her family a real chance at the American dream. But the tone shifted when Hirono expressed a strong need to protect the American middle class.

“Every day, I see these attacks — attacks on you and your families — as



Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., (top) speaks with NTEU Legislative Conference attendees (left) at the Senate Salute. Kaine received a standing ovation for his words of support and encouragement to federal employees.

you work for America. There are people like you here who are organizing, and we need to stay organizing,” she strongly emphasized. Her candid and personable delivery was met with cheers and applause from those in attendance.

Like Kaine, Hirono answered questions from members and spoke at length about the pressures IRS employees are feeling to implement the largest tax reform in 30 years. And when a question was asked by a Health and Human Service member on the brutal toll hiring freezes take on civil servants, Hirono was quick to acknowledge the negative impact such freezes have on the federal workforce to carry out its missions. “Everyone, hang tough!” she shouted in encouragement to a standing ovation. ☐

# Latest Security Breach Reveals Continued Privacy Concerns

Another day, another data breach.

If it feels like there are more incidents of criminals stealing data from businesses, the government and other organizations, you would be correct.

The number of data breaches exceeded 1,300 last year, compared with fewer than 200 in 2005, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center.

Federal employees are among those hit hard by data breaches, which is why NTEU is working on multiple fronts to protect its members.

The union continues to actively pursue protections for members harmed by the 2015 Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data breaches. NTEU's lawsuit maintains that OPM violated members' constitutional right to informational privacy by failing to adequately safeguard personal information stored in its databases.

Among other relief, NTEU wants the court to order OPM to provide lifetime credit monitoring and identity theft protection for any NTEU member affected by the cyberattacks and to take corrective measures to improve its IT security. NTEU has already successfully advocated for legislation providing the estimated 21.5 million affected individuals with 10 years of credit monitoring and identity theft coverage.

NTEU is currently appealing a district judge's dismissal of the case on the grounds that members were not sufficiently harmed by the data breaches and, in any event, their constitutional right to informational privacy was not violated. The union is expecting to present its briefing before an appeals court later this year.

"We've been pressing our case for three years now because protecting our members' sensitive and personal information is that important to us," said National President Tony Reardon.

While cyberattacks are on the rise, not all breaches come from the web.

At the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), agency officials reported that a former employee stole two sets of data containing personal employee information. While the incident is still under investigation, NTEU learned that the first incident impacted nearly 250,000 employees who worked for DHS primarily in 2014. In the second incident, the employee stole case management files from Inspector General investigations conducted from 2002 through 2017.

"We are continuing to press DHS for more information about how and when the breaches occurred," Reardon added.

DHS is providing impacted employees with 18 months of credit monitoring and a \$1 million identity theft insurance policy.

With security concerns on the minds of federal employees, NTEU has also challenged an OPM proposal to change privacy procedures for personnel files.

"Federal employees entrust highly personal information to the government, expecting that it will be kept confidential and safe from unauthorized access," said Reardon. "Why should OPM retain even more personal information about employees when it has demonstrated that it can't guarantee its security?"

## 5 Tips for Online Security

### 1. Be Alert to Impersonators

Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or know who you're dealing with.

### 2. Clear Old Devices

Before you dispose of a computer, get rid of all the personal information it stores. Use a wipe utility program to overwrite the entire hard drive. Before you dispose of a mobile device, delete all information and remove the SIM card.

### 3. Encrypt Your Data

Keep your browser secure. A "lock" icon on the status bar of your Internet browser means your information will be safe when it's transmitted. Look for the lock before you send personal or financial information online.

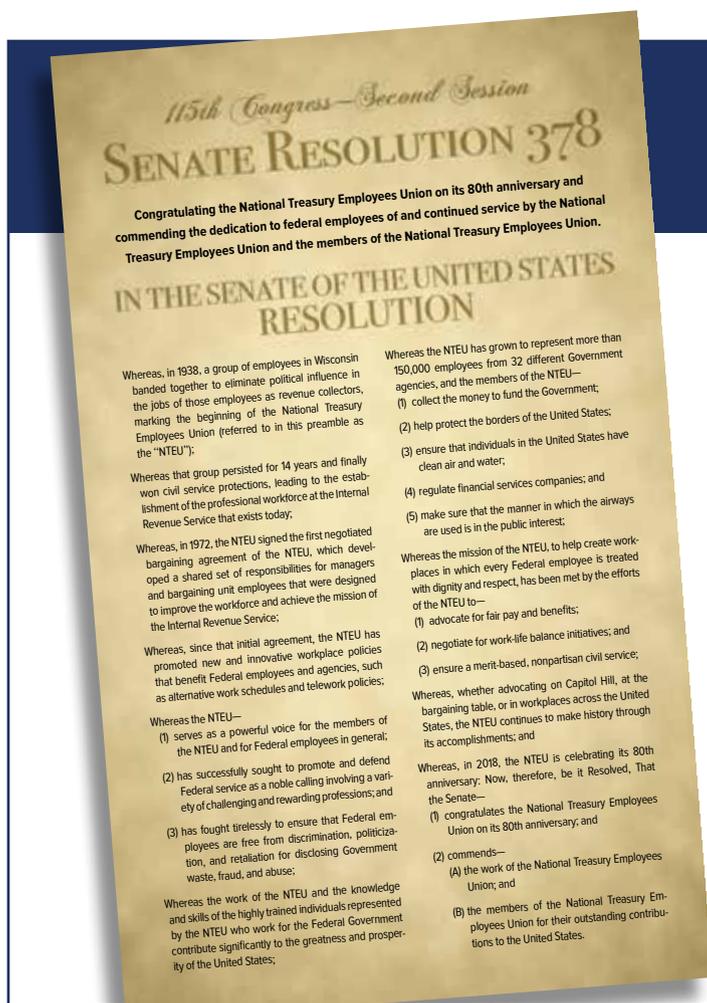
### 4. Keep Passwords Private

Use strong passwords with your laptop, credit, bank, and other accounts. Be creative: think of a special phrase and use the first letter of each word as your password. Substitute numbers for some words or letters.

### 5. Don't Overshare on Social Networks

If you post too much information about yourself, an identity thief can find information about your life, use it to answer 'challenge' questions on your accounts, and get access to your money and personal information.

Source: Federal Trade Commission. Learn more at [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)



## Senate Resolution Honors NTEU's 80th Anniversary

Sen. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, the birthplace of NTEU, introduced a Senate Resolution (S. Res. 378) congratulating the union on its 80th anniversary. The resolution, which traces the union's history and growth, recognizes NTEU's contributions and "innovative workplace policies" that benefit federal employees and their agencies. Baldwin also recognizes that "the knowledge and skills of the highly trained individuals represented by the NTEU who work for the federal government contribute significantly to the greatness and prosperity of the United States." The resolution was announced and displayed during NTEU's Legislative Conference last month.

**NTEU@80**  
PROTECTING FEDERAL WORKPLACES SINCE 1938

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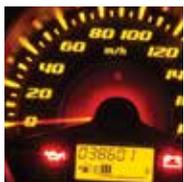
7 **Resolution Honors 80 Years**

March 2018

## ShopTALK

### Union Backs Legislation That Would Hike CBP Hiring

NTEU is supporting legislation introduced in the House that would authorize the hiring of 500 new Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers and 100 Agriculture Specialists every year until the staffing shortage is alleviated. There is an existing vacancy rate of about 1,200 CBP Officers, which have been funded by Congress but not filled, and the agency's own workload staffing model calls for adding 2,500 more Officers and 731 more Agriculture Specialists. The House bill is similar to a Senate proposal sponsored by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., also endorsed by NTEU.



### Mileage Reimbursement Rates Gets A Boost

The General Services Administration (GSA) boosted the mileage deduction for federal workers who use their privately-owned vehicles on the job by one cent a mile to 54.5 cents. The increase started Jan. 1, and it brings the federal rate to that set by the IRS for private sector employees. GSA separately sets the rate for the federal workforce, but it cannot exceed the limit established by the IRS. Every year, NTEU closely monitors this issue on behalf of the tens of thousands of federal employees who use their personal vehicles for work related duties.

### Congress Aims to Ban IRS Private Debt Collectors

Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., introduced legislation that would bar the IRS from using private collection agencies (PCA) to pursue federal tax debts. The union has long opposed the use of PCAs to chase delinquent taxpayers because it has proven to be costly, inefficient and rife in abusive tactics. After Congress mandated the outsourcing program to offset the cost of a 2015 highway funding bill, it was revived last spring despite three previous failures. S. 2425 is a companion bill to legislation (H.R. 2171) introduced in the House last year by Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., with NTEU's support.



### Taxpayers Beware of Growing Scam

The IRS is warning taxpayers to beware of a growing scam. After stealing client data from tax professionals and filing fraudulent tax returns, the criminals deposit the refund in the taxpayer's bank account and then use various tactics to reclaim the funds. In one version of the scam, criminals posing as agency officials acting on behalf of the IRS contact the taxpayer to say a refund was deposited in error and they should forward the money to their collection agency. In another tactic, the taxpayer gets an automated call purportedly from the IRS threatening criminal fraud charges, an arrest warrant and a "blacklisting" of their Social Security number. The recorded voice gives the taxpayer a case number and a telephone number to call to return the refund. While the IRS generally does not call taxpayers, private collection agencies do make calls leaving some taxpayers confused and vulnerable to scams. NTEU continues to support legislation that would stop the use of private tax collectors.



### Bill Would Gather Data on Furloughed Employees

Newly introduced legislation (H.R. 5091) would require agency heads to submit a report of all individuals furloughed during a shutdown. Each agency head would be required to report to the Office of Management and Budget the names, job description, and rate of basic pay for each non-expected employee within 120 days after a government shutdown. The bill's title, Essential Act of 2018, and language incorrectly refer to furloughed employees as "non-essential." NTEU is closely monitoring this legislation to ensure these employees are not deemed unnecessary to government operations, or that the bill promotes not paying employees following a shutdown.



## Are you registered to vote?

In 2018, the nation is in the midst of a midterm election season, where various seats in Congress are up for reelection. NTEU encourages its members to make their voices heard by casting their votes on election day in their respective states.

Visit [www.usa.gov/register-to-vote](http://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote) for more information.