

NTEU Monday Minute for the Week of February 6, 2106: Consolidation Efforts and Questions about the Hatch Act

Consolidation Efforts involving Office Moves

NTEU recently became aware of the upcoming office moves involving NRO, NRR, and ADM. We were caught by surprise for the second time in the last month (the first time was the installation of security cameras) due to a breakdown in agency communications with NTEU. NTEU expressed its concerns about the lack of partnership (discussions BEFORE decisions become final) and the negative impact this could have on a good working relationship. NTEU discussed its concerns about partnership vs having to resort to Impact and Implementation bargaining and has been assured that ADM will be more forthcoming in future communications about the activities associated with the consolidation.

NTEU is encouraged by this commitment which includes weekly meetings with the Office Director, Cynthia Carpenter. NTEU needs your feedback on the move so that we understand your issues moving forward. Please provide your comments to NTEU at nteu@nrc.gov or stop by the Union office at O 1 G22. We are open for business!

The Hatch Act

Questions have been raised about employees discussing the recent elections and whether there are Hatch Act implications. Please be aware that after elections the Hatch Act limits on political activities of federal employees is rarely given a second thought. But as a recent article entitled "To Federal Employees: Know your Rights" which you can read at www.WTOP.com points out: "This is not an ordinary time, and federal employees would be wise to be mindful of the Hatch Act, especially while using social media or attending protests. The good news is that it is usually pretty easy to avoid violating the Hatch Act by: 1) not engaging in political activity while on duty and while in the workplace, or in an official capacity at any time; and 2) not soliciting or receiving political contributions at any time. "Political activity" is any activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, partisan political group, or candidate in a partisan race. "Political activity" is not activity opposing an administration's policies or agenda or even pending legislation. The First Amendment protects your right to speak on these matters of concern, even publicly or via social media (including on your own Facebook page or on an "alt" twitter account)."

If you have any questions about this or someone has "warned" you that you cannot talk about the election or issues you may have with a current policy, recognize that you can talk about the election or issues you have while here at work. However, please be mindful that in the workplace, there may be great sentiment about the current administration – for and against it -- and you may offend others with your comments. This is not a prohibition on speaking with your colleagues who share your point of view, but a reminder that as professionals, we should be aware of the negative impact we might have on a working relationship. NTEU would like to remind you that you have a voice and this is the ideal time to focus your energies where you

can be most effective. However, creating rifts where working relationships are essential, could be counterproductive. Of course, you should ALWAYS speak up if you have a safety concern. For more in depth information about the Hatch Act specifically, you can also go to the Office of the Special Counsel's website at <https://osc.gov/Pages/The-Hatch-Act-Frequently-Asked-Questions-on-Federal-Employees-and-the-Use-of-Social-Media-and-Email.aspx>.

In Case You Missed It:

The Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA) cordially invites you to celebrate National African American History Month by attending its annual dinner on Thursday, February 16, 2017, from 6 - 8 p.m. in the Two White Flint North auditorium (social hour from 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.). The theme for this year's celebration is "Crisis in Black Education." Mr. Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D., President of the University of the District of Columbia, will serve as the keynote speaker. A full dinner buffet will be served. Come enjoy networking and socializing with NRC managers, colleagues, and friends.

COST: \$28.00 per person (\$10.00 per child - 12 and under)

This year's caterer will be Simply Delightful Soul Food and Catering, located in Suitland, Maryland. Menu items include-- Chicken Macaroni and Cheese ; Mashed Potatoes; Roast Beef; Green Beans; Corn Bread ; Fried Fish; Collard Greens; Assortment of Cakes. Lemonade, tea, and water are included in your meal. Please see the NRC Yellow Announcement for contact information. You must make your reservation by COB February 13.

Someone Said:

"Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government." --
Thomas Jefferson