

## **Lose-Lose Proposition: Less Money in Your Paycheck, Less Money for Retirement**

The administration is pushing four proposals that would significantly cut retirement benefits for all current and retired federal employees.

Released in a letter from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to Speaker Paul Ryan, the proposals call for:

- Increasing the employee deduction rates for the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Currently, most employees pay 0.8 percent of basic pay as the employee retirement deduction. Under this proposal, employee deduction rates will increase by 1 percent per year until they reach 7.25 percent of basic pay. This means federal employee pay will decrease nearly 6.5 percent with no increase in benefits. This is especially disheartening as the administration is also proposing a pay freeze for 2019.
- Reducing federal pensions by basing them on workers' basic pay five-year averages instead of three years. For most federal employees, this means less in retirement benefits.
- Reducing or eliminating retirement cost-of-living adjustments. The administration plans "to significantly reduce the cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and to eliminate COLAs under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) for current and future retirees. This means no increases to retirement benefits for the life of the employee.
- Eliminating supplements for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuitants who retire before being eligible for Social Security benefits.

NTEU is fighting hard against these wrong-headed proposals. NTEU National President Tony Reardon had this to say: "It is especially galling that these proposals were made during Public Service Recognition Week. Instead of honoring our public servants, we had to defend them from plans to slash their paychecks and undermine their retirement security. These proposals not only hurt middle-class public employees financially, they are insulting to the men and women who have dedicated their careers to serving the American taxpayers."

[Click here to learn more.](#)

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## NTEU Advocates for Seasonal NPS Employees

Tracey Wiese and her husband Bruce Carter have been seasonal NPS employees for nearly 30 years, the past 10 as backcountry rangers at Glacier National Park in northern Montana. Some years, they would take a second seasonal job at another park, often encouraged to do so by their supervisors.

They were more than surprised when they were considered ineligible to be rehired this summer because of the reinterpretation of an NPS rule that has been on the books since 1994. In essence, the rule stated that any seasonal NPS employee who worked more than 1039 hours in any given year gave up their rehire eligibility for life.

When NTEU heard about this, it sprang into action. National President Tony Reardon sent [letters](#) to members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee. NTEU also brought this issue to the attention of several members of Congress, including Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), informing him that around a dozen seasonal workers at Glacier National Park were not able to work at positions they had held for several summers, including Wiese and Carter. At NTEU's urging, Tester wrote to OPM and to the Department of the Interior seeking information on the problems.



*Tracey Wiese, doing the work she loves at Glacier National Park.*

NTEU also alerted reporters around the country to expose the issue even

more. Some of the media coverage can be seen here:

[Change in Park Service policy catches some seasonal workers off-guard](#)  
[New Hiring Policy Threatens Seasonal Employees at National Parks](#)  
[Many Lose Jobs After National Park Service Changes Interpretation of Seasonal Work Rule](#)  
[Seasonal Hiring In National Park System Impacted By Failure To Follow Rules](#)

In response to NTEU's work, OPM has issued updated guidance on NPS seasonal hiring. For some, like Wiese and Carter, they were able to compete and get hired for the season. For others, they have lost the job they loved and depended on. For NPS, it has lost seasoned, dedicated and experienced employees. NTEU continues to advocate for prospective application of the rehire policy and conversion of long-time seasonal employees to career status.

One thing is certain: Wiese is thankful for NTEU's assistance. "I am impressed with all that you and your organization have done to try to correct this unfair practice in the NPS," she said. "As a friend and fellow employee said – 'NTEU is now our favorite organization.' This has made it painfully clear how much NPS employees, and especially seasonal employees, need (union) representation."

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## **National Park Appreciation Week Events**

During National Park Week last month, NTEU President Tony Reardon visited with union members from NPS Headquarters (Chapter 296) and the National Capital Region (Chapter 366). They celebrated the ratification of Chapter 336's first union contract between NTEU and NPS and discussed current and proposed legislation on Capitol Hill.

NTEU National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey visited with NPS employees at Grand Canyon National Park at a cookout hosted by NTEU for NPS employees there who are interested in organizing and becoming part of NTEU.



National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey (pictured at right) meeting with NPS employees.

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## Learn More About NTEU at NPS

Learn more at [www.NTEU.org/nps](http://www.NTEU.org/nps).

For information on organizing a union at your workplace, email us at [organize@nteu.org](mailto:organize@nteu.org).



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