

# Chapter #296 Check-In

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<http://www.nteu296.com/>

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## Providing You Information

Welcome to the first edition of our new chapter newsletter, the Chapter 296 Check-in. While Chapter #296 – NPS-WASO – maintains a website and a Facebook page, we feel that it's time to add another channel of communication between chapter officers and bargaining unit members. We will post these newsletters on the chapter website – <http://www.nteu296.com> and our Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/141513362637957/>

## Chapter Uses Arbitration to Win > \$5,500 for Member

By John Renaud, Chapter Secretary

Becoming a Union member and paying your dues makes sound financial sense. Not only does the Union work for your financial well-being on Capitol Hill (pay increases, pension benefits, health benefits, etc.) and provide good deals just for being a Union member (e.g., special arrangements with various retailers, insurance companies, etc.), but also from time to time the Union can help you get cash or other remedies for problems that occur in the workplace.

Recently, the Union used the arbitration process to gain more than \$5,500 for a Chapter 296 member. The case involved what the Union perceived to be an improper removal -- without notice -- from the Leave Transfer Program and the subsequent denial of attempts to donate leave. We unsuccessfully tried to resolve the issues informally and then through all three internal steps of the grievance process. After NPS rejected the Step 3 grievance, the NTEU DC Field Office in the person of our Field Representative agreed to take the case to arbitration as our Collective Bargaining Agreement provides for. Both NPS Management and the Union (using Chapter 296 dues money) paid for two days of a professional arbitrator and a court reporter. Before the arbitration was complete, we reached a settlement agreement under which NPS Management agreed to reimburse our Chapter 296 member more than \$5,500 for his/her losses.

Part of the reason that we collect dues is so that we can afford arbitration when our members need it, their damage is significant, and the case is winnable. We never want to be in a situation in which we have to decline to seek arbitration because we can't afford it. We are conservative in how we spend dues money and, of course, the more Union members that we have, the better able we are to defend the rights of NPS WASO staff.

## 1201 'Eye' Street Health Center to Remain Open

By Rudy D'Alessandro & John Renaud

More good news! We have just learned that the Health Center at the 1201 Eye Street building in Washington, DC will remain open at least through the end of Fiscal Year 2014, i.e., September 30, 2014.

Here's the background to this case. Last December, in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), Madonna Baucum, Chief of the Washington Administration Program Center (WAPC) notified the chapter of its proposal to eliminate the Health Center at Eye Street. Chapter leaders met twice with WAPC officials to learn about the rationale for the proposal and to discuss options to avoid the closure of the Health Center.

The Union volunteered to solicit concerns and suggestions from employees in the Eye Street building about the WAPC's proposal and received numerous responses, which we forwarded to WAPC. On April 2, 2014, WAPC Chief Baucum sent the following message:

"I wanted to ensure NTEU was made aware that Business Services plans to fully fund the health unit through the remainder of this fiscal year (FY14). The PR [purchase request] will be submitted to contracting this week and it should be finalized within 30 days. Lena and I have met with various other health unit representatives from the DOI to explore what other options we may have available to us. We are still exploring cost various savings options to be effective on October 1, 2014 for FY15. While we continue to explore the various options available to us, we would like to continue bargaining with NTEU in order to develop a satisfactory solution which will meet everyone's goals. We will need to have the final solution identified and ready for contracting to take action by August 1st in order to be effective October 1st."

The union will continue to monitor this situation.