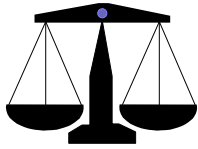


February 2001



NTEU

Chapter
52

Alert!

BUSH EXECUTIVE ORDER ABOLISHED AGENCY LABOR-MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

With the stroke of his pen, President Bush revoked Executive Orders 12871 and 13156 that created Labor-Management Partnership Councils. In the same breath, he revoked The Presidential Memorandum of October 28, 1999, entitled "Reaffirmation of Executive Order 12871 -- Labor-Management Partnerships" which reaffirms and expands upon the requirements of Executive Order 12871 of October 1, 1993.

Bush ordered that, "Among other things...the National Partnership Council is immediately dissolved." And that "The Director of the Office of Personnel Management and heads of executive agencies shall promptly move to rescind any orders, rules, regulations, guidelines, or policies implementing or enforcing Executive Order 12871 of October 1, 1993, or the Memorandum, to the extent consistent with law.

But because there are numerous agreements that spawned from the partnership orders, Bush added "Nothing in this order shall abrogate any collective bargaining agreements in effect on the date of this order." That means those agreements currently in effect will simply die a natural death on expiration.

Colleen Kelley, NTEU National President, was extremely disappointed in the President's move. In a news release, she states unequivocally that revoking the partnership "is a step back for meaningful labor relations in the federal government, and risks a return to a more adversarial-based relationship between labor and management that is costly and unproductive."

Kelley said the pre-decisional involvement of front-line employees "is what is at the heart of partnership", and revocation of that partnership has a potential for "...a return to the times of hostile relationships."

In 1991 the General Accounting Office (GAO) said labor-management relations were too bogged down in litigation and immersed in relationships that were destructive. After seven years of Partnership, however, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reported that there had "been a sizable shift toward labor-management cooperation and away from the mutually destructive, adversarial relationships common in the past."

"Committed to a better work environment."

Kelley was not the only labor leader to comment on the President's decision. Other labor leaders also criticized the move.

Bobby Harnage, President of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and member of the National Partnership Council (NPC - dissolved with the new order) called the move "hasty and foolhardy, since there was no time for new Cabinet officials to review the benefits of partnership and the billions of dollars that have been saved through partnership."

Not everybody was disappointed, however. Management representatives also had their opinions about the new Executive Orders.

Carol A. Bonosaro, president of the Senior Executives Association (SEA), also a member of the NPC, said "...the dissolution makes clear where partnership ends and management rights and responsibilities begin."

"While it was true that partnership reduced ULPs and grievances, it was no secret that SEA had concerns with the issue of mandatory bargaining over formerly permissive subjects, and objected to expanding bargaining further."

Here at home, however, SB/SE Area 10 Manager, Steve Burgess, in a Territory Managers Meeting in San Antonio last week (before the revocation order was signed) said "...starting next quarter, how do we partner better with NTEU?" Comments by some local Territory Managers also reflect a desire to continue partnering activities. So at least on some local management fronts there is commitment to retaining the common ground we have won through partnership.

In a recently received voice mail message from NTEU National, we were told that Commissioner Rossotti announced that he will retain partnership at the IRS. According to reports, it may not be named "Partnership" but pre-decisional input will continue.

We also know that when Congress speaks (and the President, of course) the IRS listens.

The Chapter doesn't want to go back to the hostile, adversarial approach to solving problems and addressing employee issues. Partnering has given employees a lot of benefits we would ordinarily not enjoy, such as input into who works, when and how, in Customer Service so that it is not just an arbitrary management selection process. It has also allowed us into management meetings where discussions around decisions are made, and serious thought was given to issues that impact employees...before those decisions got implemented.

But...and this is an important "but"...we are prepared to do so if it becomes necessary. If the walls crash in on Partnership, Chapter 52 is ready and willing to defend and work for employees in an adversarial climate. It is not our first choice, but it is something we can do without missing a beat!

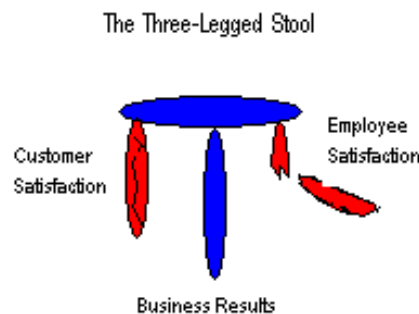


AND THEN THERE WAS SURVEY2001...

While we know that the IRS Balanced Measures include Business Results, Customer Satisfaction and Employee Satisfaction, we also know that we only have a couple of ways to measure the employee leg of the stool. One of those is employee pre-decisional input in the form of things like partnering councils, cross-functional teams and focus groups. The other was the all-employee Survey. With partnership revoked by the new administration, and current partnering agreements on a limited life span, that will leave only the Survey as a vehicle for employee input into the way we do business.

That makes the Survey even more important than it has ever been before. No matter what you might think about the Survey, it's results, or the actions taken to improve employee satisfaction based on Survey results...you may want to rethink how you are going to use that vehicle in the future!

It is, perhaps, time to speak out in a voice that is loud and clear.



National NTEU:

NTEU and the IRS have agreed to extend and substantially broaden the reach of the child-care tuition assistance program the parties initially put in place last July. The IRS will fund the expanded program with \$1 million through September 30.

NTEU President Colleen M. Kelley said the extension and improvements to the program will provide a meaningful opportunity for more families to receive tuition assistance to help meet their child care needs including any full-time or part-time permanent IRS employee, a definition that includes those working a seasonal work schedule.

Under the modifications, employees whose total family income in calendar 2000 did not exceed \$45,000 and who have a child through the age of 13 either enrolled or planning to be enrolled in a licensed child care facility will be eligible to apply for the program. Licensed childcare facilities include a properly certified home-care arrangement.

NTEU has long been the leader in promoting family-friendly workplace policies, and pushed hard for the childcare tuition assistance program, which was approved by Congress as a pilot program a year ago. After extensive lobbying by NTEU, the program was extended by Congress through Sept. 30, 2001. NTEU is working hard to make the program a permanent part of the federal employee benefit package.

Under the expanded NTEU-IRS program, the actual amount of assistance will depend on certification of eligibility of those who apply, but the parties estimate that each employee selected will receive the lesser of their actual childcare costs or approximately \$400 per month. Those with the lowest total family income will be selected for assistance first.

NTEU is the largest independent federal union, representing some 150,000 employees in 25 agencies and departments, including more than 98,000 in the IRS.

National IRS:

Not long ago the IRS instituted a new time keeping system – SETR. SETR does not change how information gets from you to the timekeeper. An employee who, prior to SETR, reported their time once every two weeks, still reports once every two weeks.

Just so you know what managers can and can't do with SETR – It IS NOT okay to change to reporting once a week. Employees ARE NOT required to sign a form 3081 for each pay period. You ARE required to sign an original form 3081 if you work compensatory time or take leave. You are NOT required to travel to the office solely to sign a 3081 form.



FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

COMMENCEMENT OF THE HISTORY OF BLACK AMERICA by Arty Haskins, Revenue Officer, San Antonio

In August 1619, the history of America's most controversial citizens began. Anthony, who had no surname, Isabella, Pedro and seventeen other Africans step ashore on American soil in Jamestown, the first permanent settlement in English America. It was just one year before the arrival of the revered "Mayflower", 113 years before the birth of George Washington, 244 years before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and 345 years before the signing of the Civil Rights Bill.

Anthony fell in love with Isabella, they were married and in 1624, Isabella gave birth to the first Negro child to be born in English America. The proud parents named their child William Tucker, in honor of a local planter. The story of Anthony and Isabella marked the beginning of the greatest involuntary migration in the history of America, and perhaps the world. However, it did not stop there, it involved 400 years of slavery, millions of lives, and a loss of national identity. This however, was not all bad. As the saying goes, "if one looks hard enough, one can glean good out of the most evil deeds". Let us take a quick glance backward!

History tells us that African Americans fought bravely in the American Revolution, a war fought in the name of "liberty", yet they were not the recipients. It was a black man who became the first martyr in that war. African Americans fought bravely in the Civil War. William H. Carney, one of the fifty-fourth Massachusetts volunteers, received a Medal of Honor for bravery in the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, July 18, 1863. John Lawson won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism in the Battle of Mobil Bay.

The list is long, and time and space would not allow me to talk about the lasting contributions made to and for the cause of all Americans. Among the list of people who contributed were Frederick Douglas, George Washington, Booker T. Washington, Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Muhammad Ali, and Alex Haley.

The struggle, for sure, has been poignant...both African- and Anglo-Americans have paid the ultimate price (their lives) for freedom and equality for all Americans. Dr. Martin L. King Jr., once said, "If you don't have anything worth dying for, you are not worth living".

"WE SHALL OVERCOME ONE DAY"



Approval has been granted for leave bank transfers to Newell Binion, member of Chapter 52 in good standing. Newell was in a car accident recently and sustained major injuries. He has now been released from the hospital and is recovering at home. His recovery is expected to take quite some time. Anyone who wishes to donate leave for Newell's recovery may do so by completing Form 9058, Leave Bank Donation.

Whatever Happened to Bob Tobias?

At its January Board meeting, the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA) elected Robert Tobias to replace outgoing President G. Jerry Shaw as President of the FEEA.

President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) from 1983-1999, Mr. Tobias was a founding member of FEEA and has served on the Board since the organization's inception in 1986.

He is currently teaching at American University as a Distinguished Practitioner in Residence and is the Director of the newly created Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation.



Chapter 52 Wants You To Know

The Chapter recently sent out a survey form to all members. The form requested updates to member addresses, and comments on what issues members felt the Chapter should be addressing. To date we have received about 25% of the forms mailed out, so if you have not done it yet, please complete it now and send it in.

The *Alert!* will carry an analysis of the responses, as well as information about what we are actually doing about your concerns. Look for that in next newsletter.

Arbitrations:

Chapter 52 just favorably settled another arbitration case. That makes us “one” and “0” for the year. The employee is happy, the Chapter is happy.

Grievances:

We have filed 22 grievances this fiscal year. The majority are comprised of appraisal and non-selection grievances. The others include bilingual awards, UNAX, higher-graded duty, retaliation, and travel and leave issues. Three have been favorably settled, three were withdrawn for various reasons and the others are still pending resolution. We have lost none to date.

Negotiations:

The Chapter recently completed negotiations over the new key card system that will be implemented in the Austin Federal Building. It is important to note that the decision to implement a key card system was made by management and based on security issues. Chapter 52 President, Tom Jones, has been informally negotiating with Chief Human Resources, Ed Roberts since the decision was announced to the Chapter.

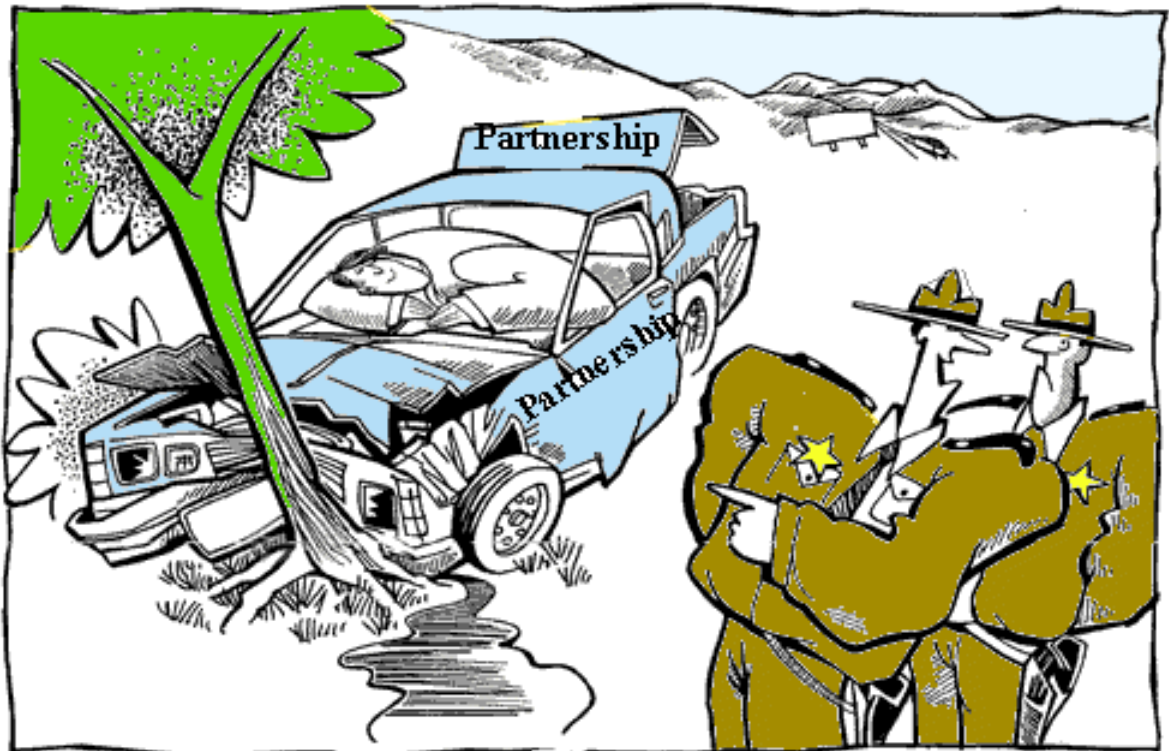
Tom had a number of concerns with the system implementation, not the least of which was the potential to monitor employee time and attendance. His main concern was that the key card system could potentially be used as a secondary time and attendance record. (i.e., how many times did Joe Employee enter the room through the key card entrance today? Or was Mary Employee late for work if the key card registered her number at 9 a.m. instead of her starting time of 8 a.m.?).

The resulting agreement addresses that issue, as well as other issues involved with the implementation of the new system, such as who has access to the information, what reports will be generated from the system, and representative access to carded areas. The agreement can be found at the Chapter Web Site (address on the last page of the *Alert!*)

Partnership: See the cartoon on the next page.



This cartoon compliments of NTEU Chapter 239 ---



"Now that we killed partnership, lets ask them to stay in Government and help us resolve all the problems."

The **Chapter 52 Alert!** can also be found on our Chapter Web Page at <http://nteu52.hypermart.net>. You can e-mail any Chapter officer, staff member or steward from the page.

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