



**NATIONAL
FEDERATION
OF FEDERAL
EMPLOYEES**

FEDERAL LODGE 2152

www.nffe2152.org



Welcome to the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) 2152. NFFE is the oldest union representing federal employees. For much of the 20th century, NFFE was the single biggest proponent of the civil service merit system. Many privileges federal employees enjoy today have come as a direct result of NFFE pioneering the cause. Retirement benefits and the "equal pay for equal work" classification system are largely due to NFFE's efforts.

NFFE was originally chartered under the American Federation of Labor (AFL), but left it in 1931. In 1999, NFFE affiliated with the International Association of Machinists (IAM), making us part of the AFL-CIO once again. For the last 90 years, NFFE has been working hard to defend workers rights in the federal sector upholding our slogan: "*We Work for America Everyday.*"

Why do federal employees, who do not get to bargain over wages, health or retirements benefits, need a union? The budgets for each agency are decided through the political process; pay raises and benefits are determined by Congress and the mission of an agency or program is also dictated by the political process. In short, federal employees tend to be (or should be) more aware of politics than most Americans because the outcome of the political process defines our benefits, careers and professional lives. NFFE, as a National Union, has the right to lobby Congress for our benefits, wages, health care, etc., whereas the agency has to rely upon BLM's budget planning process and the Executive Branch.

On a day to day basis, unions help employers create a more stable, productive workforce - where workers have a say in improving their daily lives.

NFFE 2152, your union, is the exclusive representative of the California employees in the bargaining unit and is entitled to act for the employees. You are receiving this document because you are a bargaining unit employee. We represent all employees of the BLM located in California and serviced by the California State Office's Human Resources Branch, *including temporary and seasonal employees*. Excluded are: All management officials; supervisors; employees described in 5 U.S.C. 7112(b)(2), (3),(4) (6) and (7); employees on emergency and special needs appointments not to exceed 60 days; and professional employees of Northern California Field Offices (NORCAL).

The Master Labor Agreement (MLA) or "Contract" is the written document that the Union and Management has agreed to abide by. The current MLA is divided into 46 Articles. Those articles address such things are Union Rights and Representation; Employee Performance Plan Review; Employee Rights; Hours of Duty; Flexible Workplace; Leave; Awards; Professional Recognition, Reorganization, Reassignment and Demotions; Reduction in Force/Furlough; Grievance Procedures; Disciplinary and Adverse Actions; etc. You can find this document on our website at: www.nffe2152.org. Click on *Contract & Bylaws*.

The contract provides the information employees, supervisors and managers need when there is a question regarding working conditions. It also spells out responsibilities for management as well as the union. Unfortunately, most of the Supervisor and Managers do not always read the contract before performing any actions. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to keep yourself informed. As issues come up, refer to the contract! Any questions you have regarding working conditions, **refer to the contract!** You are under the umbrella of this contract *whether you are a dues paying union member or not*. However, the union will not represent you in matters other than the grievance procedure if you are not a dues-paying union member. We are under no obligation to represent non-union members in EEO complaints, Merit System issues, Office of Special Council issues, or to take your grievances to arbitration.

Why should I join the union?

Membership provides strength to the union regarding a multitude of issues. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are your job, benefits or retirement affected by federal legislation?
- Are promotions and awards handled fairly?
- Can you use professional help to protect your job from downgrades, furloughs, or RIF's?
- Is your job targeted for contracting out?
- Do you want an effective advocate on Capitol Hill to protect your rights and benefits?
- Do you want safe and healthy conditions at your worksite?
- Do you want more protection on the job?

As a member of NFFE...

- You** elect the local and national officers who can serve you best.
- You** decide what protections to put in your union contract.
- You** improve your working conditions through bargaining with management and negotiating with agency heads.
- You** stay informed of issues that are happening within CA-BLM by receiving the monthly local lodge newsletter, attending the monthly general membership meetings, and joining the members-only e-groups.
- You** can attend training seminars on federal labor relations and protect your rights by becoming a steward or officer.
- You** have union representation for EEO, MSPB, OSC, and arbitration regarding labor disputes with your employer.
- You** can lobby in Washington, DC during NFFE's Lobby Week and discuss the issues with members of Congress.
- You** receive the latest information on civil service issues in your monthly edition of *The Federal Employee* NFFE Nat'l newsletter.

For the daily price of a cup of coffee, you will stay better informed than other BLM employees through the use of email, e-groups, the newsletter, website and phone and you will have the comfort of knowing that your union is standing behind you - *every day*.

What else should I need to know about NFFE and IAM?

Several other BLM offices in other states belong to NFFE-IAM. We are in contact with them regarding agency-wide issues such as "Managing for Excellence", A-76 Contracting Out, and whatever the "philosophy de jour" is. There is a movement afoot to start a network of BLM union members newsletter and e-group so we can stay better informed of issues that cross state lines.

NFFE also represents several other federal employees such as the Veteran's Administration, Social Security, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Forest Service. NFFE-IAM is dedicated to workers rights. Your union dues help pay for your union stewards and officers to attend the IAM training facility located in Maryland -- The William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center -- Which we refer to as the "W3."

As we enter the new century, the only way to keep up with change is with education. The W3 is the IAM's most visible sign of our commitment to provide a world class educational facility to train future IAM leaders. The Winpisinger Center teaches what it is to be a trade unionist. By studying labor history and the role unions play in our society, students learn that unions are more than service organizations. We are part of a larger movement toward economic and social justice with dignity on the job.

This is an excellent opportunity to meet other unionist from other federal agencies as well as private sector. Understanding the differences as well as the things we have in common us makes us better unionist.

NFFE-IAM supports workers who die or are injured every year on the job. After the deaths of the San Bernardino National Forest crew of Engine 57, the IAM started a fund to aid the families of the fallen firefighters.

IAM also supports Guide Dogs of America: Fifty years ago a retired IAM member turned to his union friends for help. He had become blind and been denied acceptance by guide dog schools because of his age. The members of the IAM voted to start a new guide dog school that fit with the union's commitment to equal opportunity for all. Since then, Guide Dogs of America has bred, raised and trained some of the world's most dedicated dogs and matched them with people of all ages, races, and beliefs thanks to the camaraderie, compassion and generosity of the IAM and its members.

Union members are also entitled to discounts on several types of purchases such as: credit cards, accident insurance, mortgage and real estate programs, legal services, life insurance, health savings program, car rental, auto insurance, flowers, educational services, vacations, hotels, name brand computers! Check out all the benefits at <http://www.unionprivilege.org/>

Who are our officers and how do I join?

Our local officers are elected every three years. We have an executive board of 8 members, all of which are dues paying members from all over the state. Our names, emails and phone numbers are posted on our website www.nffe2152.org. We have stewards in several offices throughout California. You can call any one of us if you have an issue or question. It is your RIGHT to join or assist any labor organization freely without fear of reprisal. We can't help you if we don't know about issues in your office/branch/division. Your active participation in your union gives you a voice, a vote, it's YOUR opinion that gets heard! YOU can make a difference! Let it be YOUR voice that is heard to make CA-BLM a positive workplace.

To join the union, ask your local steward for the form (SF-1187) or go to our website and click on JOIN NFFE 2152 on the menu. Send completed form to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Union as per the website.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

NLRB v. Weingarten, Inc. (1975)

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court, when deciding the case *NLRB v. Weingarten*, ruled that an employee has a right to Union Representation during an investigatory interview. This right is known as "Weingarten." This right was incorporated into The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute, 5 USC 7114 (a)(2)(B), and applies to federal employees represented by a labor union.

The employer is not obligated to inform the employee of his/her right to Union Representation. The *employee* is responsible for exercising his/her "Weingarten" rights when he/she has *reasonable belief* that discipline or other adverse consequence may result from what he/she says. If you are being subjected to an investigatory interview, state the following to management:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative be present. Without Union Representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion."

When an employee exercises his or her "Weingarten" rights prior to or during the investigatory interview, management has three options:

1. Stop questioning until Union Representation arrives.
2. Call off the interview, or
3. Tell the employee that the interview will be called off unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her right to Union Representation (an option the employee is strongly encouraged to **always refuse**).

READ THE CONTRACT!