



FISE

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August 10, 2018

A MESSAGE FROM THE FISE PRESIDENT

UNIONS MATTER – WE ARE NOT ALONE

Dear Union Member,

The average federal worker has very little power in society. And, it's even more true in the workplace. That's why America's history reflects why millions have organized into unions just like ours - the Federation of Indian Service Employees. We are all about improving benefits and working conditions, and providing job protections for members who work for the BIA, BIE, Office of the Special Trustee, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary. We know that non-union federal workers benefit from what we do. While FISE union stewards work hard to make sure you are protected at the worksite, we've become aware there is a sustained political assault on our union and it's coming from the very top – the President and his administration.

A recent example is the President's workforce executive order reducing the availability of official time to 25%. That's the time the union needs to adequately advocate on your behalf and represent you should you be disciplined, reprimanded, or threatened with the loss of your job. On top of that, the executive order now prohibits us from using agency office space to conduct union business on your behalf – both of these are clear violations of the existing collective bargaining agreement (CBA). These may not seem huge in the larger scheme of things, but they become important should you or one of your colleagues ever get in the cross hairs of a manager in your agency.

But, FISE is not alone on this issue. One other major federal employee union, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), recently filed an internal grievance with the Veterans Affairs Department claiming the President's controversial executive orders have created "numerous unfair labor practices." AFGE also criticized the department's "chaotic" and "haphazard" implementation of the executive order provisions as well as its inconsistent



enforcement of the new Trump workforce policies. In line with that, FISE filed a lawsuit in June taking issue with the executive orders, claiming they are illegal and wrongheaded.

Here's what has the union most concerned with being under political assault: our numbers are declining. Unfortunately, we see it as a trend, one that fits neatly into this administration's attack on unions. But be aware, it's created unexpected consequences. We know managers in the agencies you work for have refused to fill vacancies, thus reducing the capacity of an agency to deliver services to tribal communities and tribal governments. Such actions are a major blow to the trust relationship between tribes, perhaps yours, and the federal government.

We certainly don't want to passively watch our members drift away. We need numbers to take bold action, to protect the concessions we've secured during hard fought CBA negotiations. I am asking you to help us organize, face-to-face, by getting your colleagues to join FISE. Tell them unions do matter. Please call your labor representative to find out more. Thanks.

L. Sue Parton
President, Federation of Indian Service Employees