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HEADLINE: #6 2013 TNT 89-6 IRS AND FEDERAL WORKERS RALLY IN NEW YORK AGAINST SEQUESTER AND FURLOUGHS. (Release Date: MAY 07, 2013) (Doc 2013-11142)

ABSTRACT: More than 200 federal workers, including a large contingent of IRS employees, rallied at Federal Plaza in New York on May 7 to demand that Congress end the budget sequester that will cost Service staff as many as seven unpaid furlough days by the end of the fiscal year.

SUMMARY:

Published by Tax Analysts(R)

More than 200 federal workers, including a large contingent of IRS employees, rallied at Federal Plaza in New York on May 7 to demand that Congress end the budget sequester that will cost Service staff as many as seven unpaid furlough days by the end of the fiscal year.

The sequester "is just a fancy word for Congress's failure to do its job," said Colleen Kelley, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, which organized the event. "And because Congress failed to do its job, now you are being prevented from doing your job." When the IRS closes for Service-wide furlough days starting May 24, it will be the first time in modern history that the agency has closed its doors during the regular business week, added Kelley.

NTEU members, depending on the agency they work for, face the prospect of between five and 14 unpaid furlough days between now and September 30, Kelley said. Federal workers overall will contribute \$ 114 billion toward deficit reduction over the next 10 years through the ongoing, nearly three-year pay freeze, as well as through increases in pension contributions required of new hires, she said. However, IRS sequestration cuts alone will add \$ 4 billion a year to the deficit, she said, citing former IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman's estimate of sequestration effects on IRS services in a letter to House Ways and Means Committee member John Lewis, D-Ga., on October 17, 2011.

John Sims, an IRS revenue officer in the Bronx, said he drew hope from Congress's recent action to ameliorate the sequester's effects on air traffic controllers and the Federal Aviation Administration.

"I think the same thing would apply with us," Sims said. "Once people see that . . . we draw in the majority of the government's revenues [and] enable the government to continue working, I think a really objective look into what we do would have a

beneficial effect for us."

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Edward M. Filistowicz, a revenue agent in the IRS Small Business/Self-Employed Division in Boston and president of NTEU Chapter 23, said ongoing challenges in tax

administration could prompt a reexamination along those lines.

"There's not a cry out yet that the public is being harmed" by IRS sequestration cuts and imminent furloughs, Filistowicz said. He added, however, that with the rise in identity theft, as well as implementation of the healthcare reform law and tax-related consequences of possible immigration reform looming, he was "pretty sure" the cuts and furloughs would be a major problem for the IRS.

In addition to NTEU members, rally participants included delegations from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Department of Health and Human Services, the SEC, and the Environmental Protection Agency, who traveled from as far away as Boston, Washington, and Atlantic City, N.J.

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