



**STATEMENT BY
PATRICIA BARTS
MEMBER
CHERRY HILL, NEW JERSEY CHAPTER #718
NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

**THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE FEDERAL
WORKFORCE, THE POSTAL SERVICE AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**HEARING ON
“TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE PRACTICES: HOW LONG
DOES TEMPORARY LAST?”**

JUNE 20, 2010

Chairman Lynch and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Patricia Barts, I am from Atco, New Jersey, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association about my experience as a seasonal status federal worker.

I was employed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at the Philadelphia Service Center from January 1970, retiring on July 31, 2001. From 1970 until 1986, I was a seasonal employee.

In November of 1969, I took the civil service test for federal employment. Shortly after, I was called to take an eighty hour unpaid training course as a data transcriber. In early January of 1970, I was hired to work transcribing tax returns as a seasonal worker. I worked from January to June that first year. When I was called back the next filing season, I worked a similar period and additional months to work on the quarterly returns. Eventually I was working ten months each year. One of those years, during my fourteen seasonal years as a data transcriber, I worked every day except one, being furloughed on a Thursday and brought back on Monday. This was done to break my time. If I had worked the extra day, I would have been made a permanent employee -- and entitled to all of the rights and benefits that would accrue to the status.

During my time in Data Transcription, I was promoted to lead data transcriber. My duties included instructing other employees and filling in for the supervisor. I enjoyed my work, and only left the department because I could not become a permanent employee and advance to a higher grade.

In 1984, I was accepted as a seasonal tax examiner in the Correspondence Audit Department. I took this position because it offered a higher grade and a chance to become a permanent employee. After about a year and a half, I became a permanent worker. During my career in the Examination Department, I was selected to be a lead tax examiner and instructor. My duties in this department included handling problem cases and telephone calls for other tax examiners, acting as supervisor when the supervisor was not in the office, and holding yearly update classes in tax law changes each October.

When the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) was introduced to federal employees in January 1987, the employees, like me, who were in the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), were counseled to remain in CSRS. This turned out to be bad advice. At this time the seasonal employees in FERS were credited with a full year's service time if they worked at least four months out of the year. The CSRS employees contacted our bargaining unit – the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) -- about receiving the same credit for their years of service before FERS was implemented. This request was denied by IRS management at the Service Center. Their decision not only affected our years of service, it also affected our time in grade for step raises in the General Schedule pay series. The FERS employees were receiving a full year service credit to their time in grade and years of service for retirement.

It is my feeling that we should have been credited with our service the same as FERS employees. If this had been the policy, I would have 31 years and 7 months service instead of 26 years and 7 months. This policy greatly affected my retirement annuity and that of other fellow CSRS workers. I enjoyed working for the agency and always felt respected by my superiors.

Still, as a matter of equity, I believe I have been unfairly denied benefits which I should have been able to access.

I understand the subcommittee is interested in reviewing a proposal that would allow temporary employees who have extended years of service to qualify for permanent job status as well as a plan to allow such workers to credit their temporary status service towards retirement. NARFE welcomes this discussion and we would like to participate in the development of these reasonable proposals.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for focusing attention on temporary and seasonal hiring authorities and on how such service affects our status and benefit offerings. I appreciate your allowing me to testify today on behalf of myself and other active and retired employees who worked part of their public service careers as seasonal or temporary workers. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.