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1750 H Street N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 572-5500

www.nteu.org

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**Contact: Dina Long, Ext. 7058
Sheila McCormick, Ext. 7034
Mike Drapkin, Ext. 7011**

NTEU Leader Welcomes Senate Subcommittee Action To Provide 3.1 Percent Increase In 2006 To All Civilian Employees

Washington, D.C.—Civilian-military pay parity in 2006 took another important and welcome step forward, the leader of the nation’s largest independent federal union said today, with approval by a key Senate subcommittee of a 3.1 percent pay raise for federal civilian workers next year.

President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) said action by a Senate appropriations subcommittee in including the 3.1 percent raise in its version of the 2006 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill “shows again the strong bipartisan support” that exists for civilian-military pay parity. The subcommittee today was engaged in a markup of the spending legislation.

Also included in the legislation is language that requires employees be given a chance to compete for federal work through the formation of an employee bid, known as the “Most Efficient Organization,” or MEO proposal. Kelley called this a “step in the right direction” in ensuring that federal employees have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to get the job done in the most effective and efficient manner.

The White House has been aggressively pushing the competing of federal work to private contractors, even though there are few safeguards in place to monitor these contracts once they are awarded. NTEU has been leading the fight against wholesale contracting out.

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NTEU Welcomes Senate Action On 2006 Pay, Contracting—Add One

In its budget proposal on federal pay, the administration called for a 3.1 percent raise for members of the military, but only a 2.3 percent raise for federal civilian employees. NTEU strongly supports the higher raise for both groups of federal workers.

“This action clearly demonstrates the ongoing and growing understanding by members of the Senate of the key role that federal employees daily play in doing the work of the federal government,” Kelley said.

The full Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to mark up the Treasury funding bill on Thursday. President Kelley called on the Appropriations Committee and the full Senate to approve the 3.1 percent raise for civilian federal workers next year, a move that would be in line with action late last month by the full House of Representatives.

The NTEU leader also noted that the Senate was moving in accord with the House in working to ensure that employees of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) received the same pay raise as the rest of the civilian workforce, despite administration objections.

“Employees in these two agencies, among their many other duties, are this country’s first line of defense against terrorism,” Kelley said, “and they deserve a fair pay raise in line with the work they do. What they do not deserve is the White House’s continuing efforts to dismiss the value they bring to America each and every day.”

As the largest independent federal union, NTEU represents some 150,000 employees in 30 agencies and departments.