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## **2006 Successes Set Stage for Further Accomplishments This Year, Kelley Says**

**Washington, D.C.**—Midterm election successes and progress on a number of legislative, legal and other issues in 2006 have set the stage for even further accomplishments this year on behalf of federal employees, the leader of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) told a large group of NTEU members from around the country today at the start of the union's annual three-day legislative conference.

Launching three days of lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill, NTEU President Colleen M. Kelley outlined the union's priority issues for 2007 including fair pay for federal employees; an end to privatization of government work; eliminating pension offsets; achieving affordable health care; securing fairness for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employees including law enforcement officer status for Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs); and a return to labor-management partnerships.

"We now have more pro-federal employee members in the House and Senate than we have had in many years," said President Kelley, emphasizing the point by noting that this "base of support is personified by our guest speaker this morning"—House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

Nonetheless, she said, federal employees continue to face an openly hostile administration that is "still singing the same old tired tune," despite NTEU successes in broadening bipartisan congressional opposition to runaway federal contracting and playing a key role in preventing the introduction of legislation that would have sharply restricted employees' workplace rights.

"Too often, this administration views federal employees as a liability rather than its most valuable asset," the NTEU leader said. "And despite the loud and clear messages being sent by federal employees, by members of Congress on both sides of the political aisle, and by the American people that they are wrong, they cannot admit it. So our fight continues."

One key aspect of NTEU's legislative efforts in 2007 will center on the need for a fair pay raise for federal employees; the administration has proposed a 3 percent raise for next year, coming atop the

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lowest federal pay raise in some 20 years in 2007, when many federal workers received only a 1.8 percent raise. NTEU is seeking a minimum 3.5 percent raise for 2008.

If the federal government is going to attract and retain the best possible workforce, Kelley said, “federal employees must be compensated in line with their private sector counterparts.”

Privatization of federal jobs including privatized tax collection must stop, said Kelley. “We have been working to stem the tide of skyrocketing federal contracting since this administration first announced it wanted to contract out half of all federal jobs,” she said, noting that “this contractor explosion is bad for the taxpayer and for the missions of our agencies.”

The union also will be pressing proposals to make health care more affordable for federal employees and their families. Kelley called it “an outrage” that there are federal workers who cannot afford health insurance for their families. She promised support for legislation that would move more of the cost of federal health care premiums to the government; and she said NTEU will “fight a move” contained in the president’s fiscal 2008 budget proposal to reduce the government’s share of health insurance premiums for federal employees with less than 10 years of service.

NTEU, she said, will call on Congress to repeal or substantially reform two provisions of law that unfairly target and hurt tens of thousands of federal workers and retirees. Repeal or meaningful modification of both the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision “is long overdue,” she said.

Other priority issues will include NTEU’s continuing fight to secure law enforcement officer status for CBPOs, as well as other matters adversely impacting morale in DHS, such as staffing shortages and the misguided One Face at the Border program, and the importance to a return to the labor-management partnership efforts that have been replaced in recent years with a much more adversarial workplace climate.

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