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**For Immediate Release  
June 15, 2006**

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## **House Votes Triple Win for Federal Workers In Approval of Transportation-Treasury Funding Bill**

**Washington, D.C.**—House approval late yesterday of the fiscal 2007 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill provides a triple win for federal employees—including major gains for taxpayers, the leader of the nation’s largest independent union of federal workers said today.

The bill provides for a 2.7 percent pay raise for federal civilian workers next year; continues language helping to level the playing field for federal workers in federal job competitions; and contains language authored by Rep. Steven Rothman (D-NJ) that would prevent the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) from using any funds to hire private sector debt collectors.

President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) welcomed the House action, and applauded the efforts of NTEU chapters and members across the nation in helping approval of these key provisions. “A lot of hard work by NTEU at both the national and grassroots levels went into educating members of Congress about the importance of these provisions,” she said.

The pay raise for civilian workers would match the 2007 raise approved by the House for members of the military. That would continue the long tradition of civilian-military pay parity; in its initial budget proposal earlier this year, the administration sought a raise of 2.2 percent for both groups of federal workers.

**(MORE)**

## **Federal Workers, Taxpayers Win With House Bill—Add One**

President Kelley called approval of the 2.7 percent raise recognition of bipartisan understanding in Congress of the importance of fair pay to agency recruitment and retention efforts.

The contracting out provision, meanwhile, continues language won by NTEU last year giving employees a chance to compete for their jobs through an in-house team known as the Most Efficient Organization, or MEO.

The provision requires savings of at least 10 percent of what it would cost the MEO to perform the work, or \$10 million, before a federal function can be contracted out. It also prevents the direct conversion of functions involving more than 10 positions; and allows an agency to compete an activity being performed by a private contractor.

At the same time, House approval of the Rothman amendment also addresses a vital contracting issue—the IRS’s plan to turn over some 2.6 million taxpayer records to private sector debt collectors. Rep. Rothman, at a media teleconference with President Kelley yesterday, called the IRS plan “an outrageous proposal to invade taxpayer privacy,” and said the much less expensive and better alternative would be to use IRS employees for the task.

NTEU has been fighting the IRS privatization plan, and welcomed the efforts of Rep. Rothman. In addition to the program’s waste of money, President Kelley has expressed particular concern about the inherent risks to taxpayers’ personal and sensitive information from turning over such information to debt collection companies—especially in the wake of growing examples of data loss in both the public and private sectors and increased cases of identity theft.

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