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For Immediate Release
March 7, 2007

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Statement of NTEU President Colleen Kelley On Step Forward In TSO Bargaining Rights

Approval by the Senate of an amendment by Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) to legislation that would implement the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations moves Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) a welcome step closer to the collective bargaining rights they have long been denied. Such rights are fundamental to basic fairness in the workplace—particularly since private sector passengers screeners in place in some of our nation’s airports already enjoy such rights. The McCaskill amendment reiterates the authority of TSA management to take whatever actions may be necessary during emergencies and clarifies that these employees do not have the right to strike. Opponents of providing TSOs with basic collective bargaining rights—and the meaningful workplace voice that goes with them—sought to raise fears of a management incapable of responding to emergencies. That this position is totally without merit has been amply demonstrated by the record of the organized workforce at other DHS bureaus. I look forward to congressional approval of this legislation with the provision regarding TSO collective bargaining rights fully intact.