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Kelley Calls On Congress To Enact Provisions Designed To Rein In Runaway Federal Contracting

Washington, D.C.—The leader of the nation’s largest independent union of federal workers has called on Congress to rein in the administration’s runaway contracting efforts by ending the use of a vague ‘best value’ concept which more often than not leads to a waste of taxpayer dollars and returning to cost-based contract awards.

In letters to key members of Congress, President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) said “the era of wasteful contractor spending must come to an end. If the administration is unwilling to put a stop to this, then it is up to Congress to do so.”

Kelley’s letter went to the leaders of the Senate and House, as well as key members of the appropriations committees of both chambers and the leaders of their treasury-transportation subcommittees.

With an eye toward final passage of the fiscal 2006 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill, the NTEU leader emphasized that so-called ‘best value’ competitions—in which an agency can avoid awarding a contract to the lowest bidder—“are simply a way for agencies to hand over work to private contractors without having to demonstrate a clear savings to the public.”

(OVER)

Kelley Seeks Rein on Contracting—Add One

Congress, she said, “has made clear on a bipartisan basis that this is unfair to federal employees who must compete for their job,” adding that “it is also unfair to American taxpayers who must pay for this work.” The NTEU president has been leading the fight against the administration’s continuing efforts to contract out an increasing number of federal jobs.

Kelley called for approval of provisions included in the House-passed Transportation-Treasury appropriations bill by Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and in the Senate bill by Sens. Kit Bond (R-MO) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) requiring that contractors must provide a minimum savings in order for work to be contracted out.

“Congress must seize this opportunity, and put to rest once and for all, the unfair advantage given to contractors and the immense discretion given to contracting officers under the Office of Management and Budget’s A-76 Circular,” Kelley wrote.

Amendments to require more reliance on cost savings have garnered strong bipartisan support in the past and in fact have been included in transportation-treasury legislation only to be stripped from a final omnibus spending bill by a conference committee at the behest of the administration.

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