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## **NTEU Welcomes Cuts to MaxHR Funding, Urges Additional CBP Staffing in DHS Bill**

As the House of Representatives debated and voted on appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security, NTEU was pleased to see action cutting funding for the MaxHR personnel system but urged lawmakers to work toward additional funding to beef up staffing for the vital work of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

“The MaxHR personnel system is fundamentally flawed,” said National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) President Colleen M. Kelley. “DHS’s continuing efforts to move forward with its implementation, despite NTEU victories in court declaring large portions of the system illegal, are threatening our national security and causing dangerously low morale among front-line employees.”

Kelley applauded the House in approving an amendment offered by Rep. Martin O. Sabo (D-MN) to cut \$15 million in funding from the personnel system and provide it to first responders. This action follows the rejection of homeland security appropriators, per NTEU’s request, to an administration proposal of an additional \$41.7 million in resources for MaxHR. Prior to yesterday’s passage of the Sabo amendment, funding for the discredited personnel system stood at \$29.7 million, the same as in the last fiscal year. The Sabo amendment cut that amount by \$15 million and other

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## **NTEU Welcomes Cuts In MaxHR Funding—Add One**

amendments cut large amounts from the aggregate Under Secretary for Management account, of which MaxHR is a subset.

Kelley said that one clear step Congress can take to improve security at the nation's 317 ports of entry would be to provide funding for increased staffing at CBP. In its budget request the administration only sought funding for an additional 21 full-time employees—not even one additional CBP employee at each port.

“Staffing levels at the ports are ridiculously low,” Kelley said. “CBP employees are the first line of defense against terrorists, terrorist weapons and illegal drugs entering this country. There must be more staffing for this work.”

Along those lines, Kelley praised language included in the DHS appropriations bill directing CBP to conduct and submit to Congress a staffing model with its fiscal 2008 budget request. The model must include CBP's “methodology for aligning staffing levels to threats, vulnerabilities, and workload across all mission areas and per port of entry.” The workload and staffing report must also contain details on attrition rates and training figures from fiscal year 1995 through the 2008 budget request.

“A thorough and complete examination of CBP staffing is long overdue,” Kelley said, adding that this information will be extremely helpful in NTEU's ongoing efforts to bring staffing at the ports of entry up to proper levels.

NTEU is the largest independent federal union, representing some 150,000 federal workers in 30 agencies and departments, including nearly 16,000 in DHS's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP).