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**For Immediate Release
October 27, 2005**

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Statement of NTEU President Colleen M. Kelley On Proposal to Freeze Pay of Federal Employees

An effort by a group of seven Republican senators to deny federal civilian employees a pay raise in 2006 is unacceptable and will be met with vigorous opposition by the National Treasury Employees Union, its chapters and members nationwide. The purported reason for denying the 3.1 percent raise for federal workers—already approved by wide bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate—is to provide money to pay costs associated with hurricane relief. It is, instead, a cynical attempt to use natural disasters to justify policies that harm federal employees, many of who have been instrumental in rescue and recovery efforts. This attempt unfortunately dovetails with an earlier proposal from Republican House members to increase premiums for federal retiree health insurance and to make radical changes for the worse in federal retirement. Federal employees already receive lower pay than their private-sector counterparts which helps drive experienced, skilled employees from public service, and deters other talented workers from considering the federal government as a potential employer. These are steps in the wrong direction for employees, for their agencies and for the nation.

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