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## **Kelley Tackles Pay, Performance and Change At Washington Forum on Public Service**

**Washington, D.C.**—If significant changes to the way federal employees are evaluated and compensated throughout government are to be successful, federal employees and their representatives must be an active and integral part of system design and implementation otherwise the systems will fail, the head of the nation’s largest independent union of federal workers said today.

President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) told a Washington forum on public service sponsored by the Council for Excellence in Government that too often employees’ views are solicited through “listening exercises,” but few of their suggestions are actually implemented. “There needs to be a clear structure and timeline for substantive employee involvement,” said Kelley. “That really hasn’t been the case.”

President Kelley said NTEU strongly opposes moving forward with the pay system advanced in the administration’s proposed Working For America Act (WFAA.) “In spite of what OMB [Office of Management and Budget] says, employees feel things are being done to them, not with them,” Kelley said.

For one thing the NTEU leader said, the WFAA gives “unprecedented power and discretion to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM),” to make critical decisions such as defining and adjusting

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## **Kelley Criticizes WFAA Pay Proposals—Add One**

occupational groups and subgroups, and their pay ranges, along with defining and adjusting local market areas and pay supplements for those areas. Each of these actions currently is set by statute.

Kelley was sharply critical of the administration's consistent refusal to adequately identify the problems it claims to have with the present General Schedule. The NTEU leader has repeatedly offered to discuss specific problems that administration officials can identify with the current GS system, but her offer has consistently been met with silence.

"If specific problems could be identified, we could work with the agencies and the Office of Personnel Management to address those problems," Kelley said. Instead, "all we get from this administration on this question is that they don't like the system as it is and that is not adequate justification for doing away with it."

She used the Council's forum to advance NTEU's recommendations for improving performance by federal agencies. These include an expansion of the scope of collective bargaining to include pay and classification matters; basing differences in pay on meaningful differences in performance; ensuring that employees have substantive input in developing job criteria and that these criteria be clearly communicated; building managerial accountability into the system; and working with employee representatives to develop systems that are fair, credible and transparent.

The rush to modify a known and understood personnel system has proven to be "a very, very rocky road," which will continue unless employees are given a meaningful role in the process, she said.

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