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## **Study of Telework Savings Underscores Need For Federal Agencies to Boost Use of Such Programs**

**Washington, D.C.**—A recent analysis of the considerable dollar savings available to federal employees from working at home at least two days a week rather than commuting is yet another reason why federal agencies should move promptly to put reasonable and fair telework policies in place, the leader of the nation’s largest independent union of federal employees said today.

President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) said a study by the Telework Exchange “not only offers convincing evidence of savings from telework, it is particularly relevant in the face of sustained high gas prices.” The Telework Exchange is based in Alexandria, Va.

It estimated that with gas at \$3 a gallon, the average federal employee who commutes to work five days a week could save some \$55 a month by teleworking two days a week.

Kelley, who has long been an advocate of increased telework opportunities for federal employees, called on both the Office of Personnel Management and agencies to comply with a federal law that all eligible employees who can telework be given the chance to do so.

Management resistance is the main barrier to increased federal sector telework, she said, noting that their objections have led to “mixed” results by NTEU at the bargaining table.

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## **Telework Can Offset Rising Gas Prices —Add One**

“Where managers have overcome their fears,” the NTEU leader said, “we have been able to negotiate and implement programs that have proven effective and efficient for both employees and their agencies.”

She identified, as just one example, the highly-successful program that NTEU and the Patent and Trademark Office have had in place for some time, involving some 54 percent of the trademark examining corps along with other trademark professionals.

On the other hand, Kelley said, managerial reluctance at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has forced the matter to the Federal Service Impasses Panel for decision. Despite a successful pilot program at ATF four years ago, the agency has advanced a proposal under which only nine of its more than 900 eligible employees would be permitted to telework, and that for less than 50 percent of the time.

An NTEU-supported rider to the fiscal 2006 Commerce, Justice, Science and State (CJS) Appropriations bill, introduced by Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), would impose a \$5 million penalty on federal agencies that fail to meet certain benchmarks either toward establishment or better implementation of their telework programs. Rep. Wolf is the leading congressional proponent of increased telework among federal employees.

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

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