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## **NTEU Reiterates Support For Added Whistleblower Protections, Kelley Says**

**Washington, D.C.**—The largest independent union of federal employees is reiterating its strong support for legislation to strengthen protections for federal whistleblowers. Colleen M. Kelley, President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) called on Congress to approve pending legislation that would restore statutory whistleblower safeguards that have been diminished through a series of judicial decisions.

The Senate bill (S. 494) was unanimously approved by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, under the leadership of Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), last spring but has been held up by Senate Republican leadership due to administration opposition centered in the Department of Justice.

“The Senate bill should not be held hostage by congressional leadership. This legislation has strong support and deserves to be considered by the full Senate,” Kelley said, adding that “we must restore needed and appropriate protections to federal employees who speak out about waste, fraud and abuse in their agencies.”

President Kelley took note of a recent study by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service that concluded congressional efforts at enacting laws and institutions to protect whistleblowers have

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not provided the anticipated protections, in part because of federal court decisions that have narrowed the scope of whistleblower protections.

The Senate bill would provide a number of important reforms impacting whistleblower disclosures; protecting individuals from such acts of retaliation as unwarranted investigations or revocation of their security clearances; making permanent the prohibition against requiring federal workers to sign non-disclosure agreements that fail to guarantee the First Amendment rights provided to them by law, including under the Whistleblower Protection Act; and establishing a five-year pilot program that would give whistleblowers the right to appeal decisions of the Merit Systems Protection Board to the regional federal circuit courts of appeal.

S. 494 “is an important measure that has languished too long,” President Kelley said. “It’s a good bill not only for federal workers but for all Americans, and it should move forward to enactment.”

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

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