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FEW Issues Legislative Agenda for Second Session of 111th Congress; Stresses Issues to Attract New Federal Workers

(Washington, D.C.) – Federally Employed Women (FEW) issued its Legislative Agenda for the second session of 111th Congress and its top legislative priorities for 2010. “We first need to thank legislators for the many successes we achieved in 2009 for retiring and retired workers, especially measures impacting unused sick leave, FERS redeposit, rehiring retirees and not penalizing part-time workers in their retirement benefit calculations.” asserted Sue Webster, FEW’s National President. “However, we remain concerned about the federal government’s ability to attract younger workers to replace these thousands of retirees,” Webster advised. Within eight years, 90 percent of federal executives will be aged 50 or older.

The FEW Legislative Agenda can be downloaded at <http://few.org/docs/legislative/FEWagenda111.pdf>.
The Fact Sheets are available at <http://few.org/docs/legislative/FEWfactsheetletter111.pdf>.

The organization’s four top legislative goals are:

1. Enactment of a Paid Parental Leave Act (HR 626/S 354) that provides paid leave for federal workers following the birth or adoption of a child;
2. Enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment which provides full legal equality for women under the United States Constitution (HJRes 61);
3. The repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) Social Security provisions that adversely impact mostly lower-income women (HR 235/S 484); and
4. Enactment of legislation to help working families provide quality day care for their children (HR 460/S 210).

New to FEW’s list of priorities this year is the day care bill. “Our members are very aware of the need for work/life balance and adequate and affordable day care for their children tops the list to achieve this need,” explained Janet Kopenhaver, FEW’s Washington Representative. “We are working with the sponsors of these bills to not only move these bills through the legislative process, but also to determine how available and affordable day care centers at federal agencies are for younger members of the federal workforce,” Kopenhaver added. In that vein, FEW will soon be releasing the results of a membership survey on work/life balance benefits in federal agencies, as well as specific information on federal agency day care facilities. Information gleaned from this survey will be used to help determine what legislative fixes might be needed.

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The FEW Legislative Agenda is broken into three tiers. Tier I are those issues that directly impact federally employed women the most, including Paid Parental Leave, retirement benefits, enactment of an Equal Rights Amendment and affirmative employment. Tier II issues are those which impact all federal workers such as worker safety and health and whistleblower protection. Tier III are legislative issues that impact women in general and include women's health-care issues and economic empowerment.

“Copies of this Agenda, as well as the fact sheets and respective employment statistics (http://www.eyeonwashington.com/few_map_2008/), are being delivered to every legislator's office on Capitol Hill,” advised Cecelia Davis, FEW's National Vice President for Congressional Relations. “It is important for all lawmakers to know the views of federal workers, because every legislator can claim active or retired federal workers as constituents.” Over the next few months, Kopenhaver will be meeting with key legislators and their staffs to discuss FEW's Legislative Agenda.

FEW is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 after Executive Order 11375 was issued that added sex discrimination to the list of prohibited discrimination in the federal government. FEW has grown into a proactive organization serving over one million federally employed women – both in the military and civilian workforce.

For more information about FEW, visit www.few.org.

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