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FEW Issues Legislative Agenda for 111th Congress; Delivered to Every Legislator's Office

(Washington, D.C.) – Federally Employed Women (FEW) issued its Legislative Agenda for the 111th Congress. FEW members are pursuing positive legislative changes that will impact federally employed women in particular and federal workers in general. FEW remains concerned about the vast number of retirements expected over the next five years, and this fact helped determine the organization's legislative goals. "We do not want to see essential services provided by federal workers that Americans have come to rely on disrupted by this brain drain," asserted Sue Webster, FEW's National President. 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 five top legislative goals for this year are:

1. Enactment of a Paid Parental Leave Act (HR 626/S 354) that would provide paid leave for federal workers following the birth or adoption of a child;
2. Enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment which would provide full legal equality for women under the United States Constitution;
3. Enactment of the FERS Sick Leave Equity Act (HR 958) which corrects the inequity between Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) provisions with respect to paid sick leave;
4. 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
5. Enactment of a FERS Redeposit Act (HR 828) which would allow returning federal workers to reinvest their cashed out FERS annuity.

"FEW has developed an active grassroots advocacy program. Starting with this new Congress, we will be actively working to achieve these goals, as well as other important initiatives as they arise," advised Cecelia Davis, FEW's Vice President for Congressional Relations. "We are hoping to send at least 2,000 letters this year from our members to their Capitol Hill legislators."

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The FEW Legislative Agenda is broken out into three tiers. Tier I are those issues that directly impact federally employed women the most and which FEW members most actively work on through their advocacy efforts. This includes 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 includes women's health care issues; and economic empowerment.

“Copies of this Agenda, as well as fact sheets on our top legislative issues, have been delivered to every legislator's office on Capitol Hill,” advised Janet Kopenhaver, FEW's Washington Representative. “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.” Last week FEW released new employment statistics detailing how many federal workers and retirees live in each congressional district and state and are then broken out by agency. Over the next few months, Kopenhaver will be meeting with new Members of Congress, as well as other 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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