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ACTION ALERT – 110th Congress; Second Session

FEW Leaders, Regional Managers and Legislative Chairs are asking our many members and other interested parties to send letters to their legislators in Washington, DC on the top legislative priority issues for federally employed women for this second congressional session of the 110th Congress. We urge all FEW members to visit our grassroots website – www.capwiz.com/few – and send your letters today.

First – an observation. Never have there been so many pieces of legislation introduced in one session that benefit federally employed women – both retirees and current workers. From GPO/WEP Repeal to Paid Parental Leave to FERS Redeposit to Diversity, legislators are truly stepping up to the plate to increase benefits and make the federal government a much better place to work.

So we must do all we can as beneficiaries of these bills to help our Congressional sponsors move these measures forward. The first step is to increase the number of co-sponsors on each bill. That is where constituent pressure is crucial.

There are seven Alerts on our site concerning important legislative issues that FEW has determined are top goals for our organization. All are experiencing momentum, but certainly will not be achieved without thousands of letters being sent to legislators over the next couple of months. Here is a summary of the issues (more details can be found at www.capwiz.com/few):

1. **Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act (S 2148/HR 3774)**: FEW was a critical member of a group of organizations that basically wrote this bill so we now need to do all we can to obtain more co-sponsors. Because we are the only group of the coalition that has an effective and efficient Advocacy website and campaign, it is pretty much up to us to send in thousands of letters. One important point: FEW has sent legislative packets under my signature to every Member of Congress outlining our top legislative priorities, and we already obtained two additional co-sponsors from that alone. **Just think how successful we can be with constituent letters!** Currently there are 12 co-sponsors on HR 3774 and none on the Senate bill. We need to increase these numbers.

NOTE: With respect to the House bill, there is another important development. FEW's President has been asked to testify at a hearing in April on SES Diversity. This will be the third time FEW has been asked to testify on this topic. We would like to use our time to brag about all the work we are doing to move the bill

forward. So it is even more important for all FEW members to send in their letters to their legislators today so that our numbers are impressive and eye-opening for the legislators participating in the Subcommittee hearing.

2. **Paid Parental Leave for Federal Workers (S 80/HR 3799)**: Another legislative priority for FEW are these bills which create a new category of paid leave – separate from annual or sick leave – for federal workers following the birth or adoption of a child. Again, FEW’s congressional packet letters obtained two additional co-sponsors, but we need many more! Currently there are 12 co-sponsors on HR 3774 and four on the Senate bill (one of which resulted from a FEW member letter). We need to flood their offices with letters supporting both of these bills.
3. **FERS Redeposit**: If this bill is enacted, returning federal employees would be able to redeposit their cashed out annuity upon re-employment. This benefit is already available to federal employees who are covered under the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Again, we need to have constituent pressure on legislators to co-sponsor this bill.
4. **GPO/WEP Repeal (S 1647/HR 2772)**: While we do not currently have an Action Alert for the full repeal bills of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) because no action is really necessary for additional co-sponsors on these bills, we do have an Alert for a set of bills that would help alleviate the WEP problem. These measures would repeal the WEP and replace it with a more fair benefit formula that would allow federal retirees to receive benefits equal to what they contributed to the Social Security system through their jobs in the private sector. FEW supports this approach, and by adding co-sponsors to these bills, we will ensure that they are considered as Congress grapples with overall Social Security reform.

So if you have not already participated in all these efforts, please do so today. Log onto our Advocacy website at www.capwiz.com/few, click on each Action Alert tab, type in your zip code, and your letters will be sent automatically. Encourage your colleagues, friends and family to do so as well.

If you have any questions at all, do not hesitate to contact FEW’s Washington Representative at 703-528-7822 or janetk@eyeonwashington.com.