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WOMEN WORK!
The National Network for Women's Employment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bush Administration's Attack on Working Women Continues

Washington, DC –The interests of nearly 70 million women in the US labor force are in jeopardy due to an unnecessary cut to the already meager budget of the Women's Bureau by the Department of Labor. The cut to the only federal agency devoted to the concerns of women in the workplace represents the latest maneuver in the Bush Administration seven-year campaign to dismantle the Bureau and its critical initiatives for women. Women Work! the National Network for Women's Employment calls on Secretary Elaine Chao and the Department of Labor to reinstate the full budget of the Women's Bureau and amply fund the agency in the future.

"This cut to the Women's Bureau's budget is unnecessary, unconscionable and unacceptable," said Jill Miller, Women Work! President & CEO. "The Department of Labor received more than enough funding to protect the Bureau's budget for 2007, but instead the Bureau was singled out for cuts."

Since the Bush Administration took office in 2001, it has initiated a strategic series of attacks on the Women's Bureau and its ability to address the challenges of women workers. In 2001 the Administration attempted to close all 10 of the Bureau's regional offices. Also in 2001, information about the wage gap and the Bureau's Equal Pay Matters initiative was erased from the Bureau's web site. The initiative was later completely eliminated. Since 2006, more than half of the career positions in the Bureau's national office were targeted for outsourcing. The latest attack—the cut to the Women's Bureau's Fiscal Year 2007 budget—was discovered in mid-March.

"The Bush Administration has sentenced the Women's Bureau to a long, slow death by a thousand cuts," said Miller. "This action by the Department of Labor devalues the important role of women in today's workforce and demonstrates a callous insensitivity to the on-going challenges women face in balancing work and family."

Programs funded by the Women's Bureau help hundreds of thousands of women succeed and advance in the workforce each year. Women's workplace success is instrumental for the millions of American families that depend on women's wages to survive. The budget cut jeopardizes the Bureau's projects to help working women meet the challenges of the 21st Century workforce. The cut also harms a grant program that supports the nation's only job training and education service delivery system for women.

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities. For more information, visit www.womenwork.org or call (202) 467-6346.

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