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Hatch Act Modernization Act Approved by Senate Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs unanimously approved S. 2170, the Hatch Act Modernization Act of 2012. The legislation would allow most state and local government employees to run for partisan political office without violating the Hatch Act.

"I commend Senators Akaka, Lee, Lieberman, and Levin for advancing this common sense reform," said Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner. "The Hatch Act plays a critical role in keeping partisan politics out of the public workplace. However, the law too frequently causes the Office of Special Counsel to interfere with the rights of well qualified candidates to run for local office. The Hatch Act Modernization Act will allow us to prioritize enforcement in serious cases of political misconduct, while respecting the independence and integrity of state and local elections."

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.