Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Tertiary Education Union of Australia (NTEU) which represents 26,000 academic and professional staff employed in Australian universities and is an affiliate of Education International and the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

We are very concerned to learn that Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker has introduced a Bill which would deny 175,000 public employees, including our colleagues in the AFT and NEA, their right to collectively bargain and would require them to cover more of their health care and pensioner plans. We are also deeply concerned about the anti-union pattern developing around the United States, with many more State Governors (including Indiana, Ohio and Idaho) adopting similar proposals as financial exigency measures.

NTEU extends its support to the AFT, NEA and other public sector unions in their struggle to protect the right of public employees to freedom of association and to collectively bargain. We note that President Obama has also unequivocally articulated his support for public employees “They make a lot of sacrifices. It is important not to vilify them or to suggest that somehow all these budget problems are due to public employees”; and we wholeheartedly endorse his sentiments.

NTEU also supports the efforts of all public sector unions to engage in a respectful and productive dialogue with the relevant States governments to resolve this dispute.

In solidarity,

GRAHAME MCCULLOCH
General Secretary
National Tertiary Education Union (Australia)