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March 7, 2019

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE YES on the For the People Act (H.R. 1) to ensure that all Americans can freely exercise their constitutional right to vote. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's report card for the 116th Congress.

First passed in 1965, the Voting Rights Act addressed persistent and purposeful discrimination — through literacy tests, poll taxes, intimidation, threats, and violence — which had curtailed political participation for millions of American citizens. The Supreme Court invalidated key provisions of the law in 2013, ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* that states and localities with recent histories of voter discrimination can change their election laws without the approval of the U.S. Department of Justice. As a result, voter suppression efforts have exploded. In the 2016 elections, the first in decades without the protection of the Voting Rights Act, 33 states implemented laws to discourage voting by certain groups and communities.

H.R. 1 would address these problems by:

- Committing to restoring the Voting Rights Act and updating its preclearance provision
- Combating voter purging based on records in past elections
- Broadening access to the ballot box by establishing automatic, same day, and online voter registration; making Election Day a federal holiday; and expanding early voting opportunities
- Promoting election reliability and security by reauthorizing the bipartisan Election Assistance Commission and requiring voter-verified permanent paper ballots
- Banning practices that hinder or discourage voting like distributing false information and “voter caging” — sending mail to addresses on the voter rolls, compiling a list of the mail that is returned undelivered, and using that list to purge or challenge voter registrations

H.R. 1 would also improve transparency and fairness in our campaign finance system, call for a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*, and strengthen federal ethics laws to help our nation fulfill its most solemn promise: government of the people, by the people, and for the people. We urge you to VOTE YES on H.R. 1.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association