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July 25, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, the NEA asks you to cosponsor the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2019 (H.R. 3463). This legislation will ensure that employees of state, territorial, and local governments—a group that includes many educators—have the opportunity to negotiate collectively on their pay, benefits, and working conditions. The ability to do so raises the standard of living for the workers themselves, their families, and their communities.

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling last year in *Janus v. AFSCME* made it more difficult for public-service workers to come together in unions to bargain collectively. Yet, interest in joining unions has been growing, precisely because working people understand that as union membership falls, wages, working conditions, and benefits decline. When union membership grows, the benefits flow not only to union members, but to *all* workers; a rising tide lifts all boats.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act grants public-service workers the ability to:

- form, join, or assist unions, to bargain collectively, and to engage in other activities to improve their working conditions;
- have their public employer recognize their union through democratic procedures;
- have a procedure for resolving impasses in collective bargaining; and
- authorize the deduction of fees to support the union's work.

The right to negotiate collectively directly affects the lives of working people and the opportunities they are able to provide for their families. This legislation will empower public-service workers, who perform jobs that all of us depend on, to advocate for themselves and to provide and champion the high-quality public services every community deserves. Once again, I urge you to co-sponsor the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association