



1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García  
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*Executive Director*

June 4, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on House Administration  
Subcommittee on Elections  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the NEA, who teach and support students in each of our nation's congressional districts, thank you for holding today's hearing, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Voting Rights and Election Administration: Ensuring Safe and Fair Elections." We applaud the subcommittee for highlighting the importance of this issue and providing the opportunity for the NEA to submit these comments for the record.

Democracy depends on the principle of "one person, one vote," but this principle is meaningless without access to the polls. Recent primary elections show that many voters will risk their health and safety during this deadly, highly contagious pandemic to exercise their right to vote—but they should not have to do so.

NEA members support provisions in the CARES Act and in the HEROES Act to protect voting rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we encourage members of this committee to consider additional measures to broaden access to voting. Voting methods should enhance participation, and this means expanding early in-person voting; vote-by-mail options; online voter registration; and voter education programs to inform communities of new practices, including changes in voting locations. In addition, poll workers must be provided with personal protective equipment to keep themselves and others safe.

Across America, the protests we witnessing are driven by people—particularly in black and brown communities—who feel powerless to change the conditions of their lives and robbed of the opportunity to have a real say in what happens in their neighborhoods. At a time of so much hardship and pain, we need *more* access to the vote—not less. We must take additional steps to protect the most sacred privilege we have as Americans, regardless of our color, ethnicity, religion or spiritual practices, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status: the right to express our deepest values and beliefs on Election Day.

Thank you again for holding this hearing on what can be done to ensure and protect voting rights during the pandemic and for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association