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January 5, 2021

United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515-0001

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the NEA who teach students at all levels in communities across our nation, we write to express our alarm at the attempt by some members of Congress to subvert the 2020 presidential election results by blocking formal certification of President-elect Joe Biden's victory. This threatens the will of the voters, the democratic principles our nation was founded upon, and the values we cherish as Americans.

The charges of fraud in the 2020 presidential election have been investigated and litigated. Thus far, those challenging the results have lost before more than 90 state and federal judges—including U.S. Supreme Court justices. It is clear that members of Congress who will attempt to block formal certification are ignoring the courts, an equal branch of government, as well as the voters.

Moreover, it is not unnoticed that these members are most focused on disregarding the votes cast in communities of color. In fact, the loudest accusations of voter fraud have been aimed at cities in which the majority—or high proportions—of voters are Black or Brown. When viewed through the lens of America's history of subjugating and denying the vote to people of color, the attempt to silence these voters is a stain on our progress, and a clear rebuke of the martyrs who died fighting to expand voting rights and protect the franchise in all communities.

Voters expect Congress to represent them with integrity and to make their lives better. They expect members to lead us to higher ground, not follow others down the rabbit hole of baseless allegations of election fraud, or to throw tantrums when an election result is not to their liking. But instead of using this moment to deepen voters' understanding of and faith in our electoral processes, some members of Congress are promoting cynicism and debunked theories that will only inflame and confuse voters, and ultimately delegitimize that which has made us the envy of the world: the free and fair elections and peaceful transition of power upon which democracy rests. These members maintain that they are simply representing those who believe the presidential election was fraudulent. Instead, they are pandering to voters by failing to courageously and forthrightly tell them the truth: The election is over, there was a clear and decisive winner, and it is time to move on.

In government and social studies classes, NEA members teach students about the Constitution and the duties of citizenship. They teach that our elections depend not only on citizens to exercise the right to vote, but also on our willingness to accept the results of elections—regardless of who wins. They teach that interested parties can and often do challenge election results. But once the challenges have been examined, those on the losing side concede defeat because they prize our democratic traditions over any single Election Day win or loss. We do not overturn a race or force a “do-over”

because we are unhappy with the result. These lessons ring hollow, however, if members of Congress can simply replace the voters' will with their own.

More fundamentally, we all teach our children—even before they begin formal schooling—this basic concept of fair play: In any competition, someone will win and someone will lose. When you lose, decorum and self-respect compel you to accept defeat, no matter how close and hard-fought the competition, whether you lost by one point or 100. Today, our children are getting a lesson from some elected “leaders” in what *not* to do: Throw a temper tantrum, discredit the process, attempt to delay the inevitable, and if none of that works, sow as much discord as possible before you exit the field.

Americans, regardless of political party, deserve far better from our representatives. At the very least, they deserve to have their voices heard and their judgment respected.

Last year was overflowing with misery and uncertainty, and each day seemed to bring worse news of the pandemic, financial hardship, racial injustice, and political paralysis than the day before. Americans are hoping that in 2021, Congress will focus on the health, education, economic, and social crises that beset our nation. This attempt to overturn the election, by contrast, is a sideshow that offers more havoc and chaos. We have been through too much to endure such a blatant and dangerous affront to democracy, and insult to the memory of those who devoted their lives to ensuring that all voices matter on Election Day. We urge members of this body to respect the intelligence and the will of the voters and certify the 2020 presidential election results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association