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February 10, 2021

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The 3.1 million members of the National Education Association teach and support students in public schools and on public college campuses, assisting them in realizing their potential and preparing them for careers. Our members also include public-service workers in other fields, many of whom have been on the front lines throughout the pandemic. We enthusiastically support President Biden's nominee for Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh, and urge you to vote YES on his nomination. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 117th Congress.

The mission of the Labor Department is "to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights." Marty Walsh has made these goals his *personal* mission, whether as a labor leader, state legislator, or mayor of Boston. Given the toll COVID-19 has taken on our nation, we need the leadership of Marty Walsh—someone with a proven commitment to improving opportunities for those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic, particularly workers of color, women, and low-income workers—today more than ever.

As the head of the Building and Construction Trades Council from 2011 to 2013, Walsh created the Building Pathways program, now recognized as a model for increasing diversity in the workplace. As mayor, Walsh established Boston's first Office of Workforce Development and charged it with innovating new strategies to ensure workers had access to skills development opportunities, and other initiatives to prepare working people for good jobs, including City Academy, a training pipeline into jobs with the city or with partnering organizations.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, the Labor Department must develop policies that will contribute to economic growth and match working people's skills with available jobs. The department must also reinvigorate the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which languished under the previous administration, to keep working people safe on the job. The department must protect sick leave for employees who have it and fight to extend leave provisions to those who do not. At the same time, the department must look ahead to what the jobs of the future will be, and what skills those jobs will require.

This is an ambitious agenda, but we are confident Marty Walsh has the skills and experience necessary for such a challenging time. We urge you to vote YES on his nomination as Secretary of Labor.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association