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Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association—educators who know that their working conditions impact students’ learning conditions—thank you for holding the committee’s March 8 hearing on defending the right of workers to organize unions, free from illegal union-busting by employers. We submit these comments for the record.

NEA members are fiercely protective of their right to come together to organize and advocate for the resources and support they need to do their jobs well. This right acknowledges that they are trusted professionals with the expertise to make decisions leading to student success. Because NEA members appreciate what having a voice in the workplace means for them, they believe that this right, fundamental to the liberties we treasure as Americans, must be afforded to all working people.

Unfortunately, workers who attempt to exercise the right to organize often face retaliation from their employers merely for wanting a say in their pay, benefits, and working conditions. Employers harass, ostracize, demote, and even fire them for seeking respect on the job. The goal is not only to punish the targeted employee; it is to quash any hope employees may have of ever organizing. Employers and their law firms euphemistically refer to their efforts as “union avoidance strategies.” These so-called strategies are aimed at suppressing workers’ freedoms of speech and association, and, worst of all, breaking their spirit. Organizing a union is a legally protected activity, and union-busting employers must face appropriate penalties and repercussions for breaking the law.

Supporting workers’ right to organize, free from union-busting, is not only the morally and ethically sound choice; it has practical benefits for employers. The right to collectively bargain may reduce employee turnover and improve retention of employees who feel invested in an organization’s success. Furthermore, unionized workers tend to earn more than workers who are not represented by unions, and are better able to invest in their communities by purchasing homes, goods, and services. A 2021 study by the [Economic Policy Institute](#) found that in the 17 states where unionization is highest, state minimum wages are, on average, 19 percent higher than the national average—and 40 percent higher than the state minimum wage in states with low union density.

The right to stand together in unions means working people can do the things that matter to us all: advocate for what they need to do their jobs efficiently and safely, and take care of their families. Congress must affirm that union-busting is illegal and take the steps necessary to ensure that working people can freely exercise their right to organize and collectively bargain.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association