



June 20, 2023

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, dedicated public service workers who teach and support students in preK-12 schools and on college campuses, we urge you to vote YES on the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act (S. 567), the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 728), and the Healthy Families Act (S. 1664). Votes related to these bills may be included in the NEA Report Card for the 118th Congress.

NEA members live and work in 14,000 communities across America. In the states in which they have the right to come together to negotiate salaries and benefits, NEA members know firsthand that collective bargaining can reduce income inequality and help working families to share in economic growth. However, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), just over 11 percent of all workers were union members in 2022.

The **PRO Act (S. 567)** would reduce the barriers to private-sector union organizing by:

- Revising the definition of “employee” and “supervisor” to prevent employers from classifying employees as exempt from labor law protections;
- Expanding unfair labor practices to include replacement of or discrimination against workers who participate in strikes;
- Making it an unfair labor practice to require or coerce employees to attend employer meetings designed to discourage union membership; and
- Allowing injunctions against employers engaging in unfair labor practices involving discharge or serious economic harm to an employee.

The right to negotiate salaries and benefits is crucial to securing working families’ financial future, and it goes hand-in-hand with pay parity for women and men. But according to the Economic Policy Institute’s “[State of Working America Wages Report](#),” we are trending in the wrong direction: The gender wage gap grew from 20.3 percent in 2019 to over 22 percent by 2022. This wage gap means that women who work full-time, year-round are typically paid only 84 cents for every dollar men are paid, equating to lower lifetime earnings, Social Security benefits, and pensions.

The **Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 728)** would help close this pay gap by:

- Requiring employers to demonstrate that gender is NOT the reason they pay employees different wages to perform the same jobs;
- Prohibiting employers from asking job candidates about their salary histories and protecting employees from retaliation if they discuss their pay with colleagues;
- Requiring employers to provide the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with salary, promotion, and dismissal data by race and gender; and
- Putting in place robust remedies for discrimination.

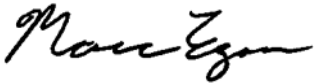
Having paid sick days gives working families additional security, ensuring that workers can take care of themselves and their loved ones when they are ill, without losing their jobs. But currently, 34 million workers in our nation lack paid sick time entirely, including 25 percent of the private sector workforce and 9 percent of the public sector workforce, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Low-wage jobs are least likely to offer paid leave.

The **Healthy Families Act (S. 1664)** would provide greater protections by:

- Creating a national standard for paid sick days that allows employees of businesses with 15 or more workers to earn up to seven protected paid sick days each year (or seven unpaid sick days if they work for businesses with fewer than 15 employees) to recover from their own illness, care for sick family members, access preventive care, or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability;
- Allowing employees to carry over accrued paid sick time from one year to the next;
- Allowing employees to use paid sick leave to address their own or a family member's physical or mental illness, or to attend a meeting about a child's health condition or disability;
- Allowing employees to use paid sick leave to seek medical attention or other services to address domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and
- Prohibiting employers from requiring employees to search for replacement workers to cover the hours during which employees are using paid sick leave.

The Protecting the Right to Organize, Paycheck Fairness, and Healthy Families acts will improve the financial health and security of working families, and by extension, strengthen the economic vitality of our nation. We urge you to vote YES on each of them.

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