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March 8, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I urge you to vote Yes on the “Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act” (H.R. 842). As the largest public-sector union our members believe that all workers, both private and public sector, deserve the right to organize and bargain collectively to improve their working conditions.

Workers need a voice on the job now more than ever before. Since the beginning of the pandemic, unions have advocated for workers’ safety and protections. Nurses, teachers, first responders, bus drivers, grocery store workers and other essential workers were in desperate need of personal protective equipment and the right to use paid leave to self-quarantine or take care of someone who might have been affected, which unions fought for. Unions also helped to prevent layoffs and furloughs to save jobs and win additional premium pay and paid sick time.

The value that unions provide to workers and their families creates a strong middle class that makes the economy work for all Americans. With high unemployment and people struggling to make ends meet, it is important to strengthen workers’ rights and the ability to organize. On average, a worker covered by a union contract earns 11.2 percent more in wages than a worker in a nonunion workplace in the same sector. Living wages and benefits with union jobs can lead to job competition with nonunion jobs, helping to strengthen local economies.

The PRO Act strengthens federal laws that protect workers’ rights to organize and collectively bargain for wages, paid leave, health insurance, retirement benefits, and workplace protections and safety. The bill increases penalties for employers that violate workers’ rights. It strengthens support for workers who suffer retaliation. It


American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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prevents employers from misclassifying employees, and it prohibits employers from interfering in union elections.

AFSCME strongly urges Congress to pass the PRO Act to build back our country and to get us out of this economic crisis stronger than before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bailey K. Childers". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bailey K. Childers
Director of Federal Government Affairs

BKC:HB:cg