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September 13, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to **VOTE NO** on the Johnson amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (H.R. 2810), which would restrict the use of official time and reduce the retirement benefits of educators and other federal employees. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 115th Congress.

The proposed amendment would deprive educators and other federal employees of pension credit for official time spent on labor-management relations and representing employees. Official time is essential to ensure that federal employees have a voice at the worksite — those who belong to unions as well as those who do not.

Employee representatives use official time to address issues such as working conditions and workplace safety; protect employees from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and other factors unrelated to job performance; and explore training and educational opportunities. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 prohibits the use of official time for union-specific business such as soliciting members, electing officers, internal meetings, and partisan political activities.

Official time is a win for federal agencies, federal employees and, most important, the taxpayers they serve. We strongly urge you to **VOTE NO** on the amendment to H.R. 2810 that restricts the use of official time and deprives educators of pension credit.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association