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March 7, 2016

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association (NEA) and the students they serve, we strongly urge you to **Vote No** on the *Official Time Reform Act of 2017* (H.R. 1364) and H.R. 1293 during the bills' markups on Wednesday. Votes associated with this issue may be included in the NEA Legislative Report Card for the 115th Congress.

H.R. 1364 is an unnecessary attack on federal employees for working on Labor-Management relations and on representing federal employees. Further, the bill seeks to take away creditable service time for any time spent conducting official representational duties which harmfully cuts federal employees' retirement benefits. Further, we believe you should oppose H.R. 1293 which would create unnecessary reporting requirements for a system which is inherently designed to save time and money in the federal government

Official time ensures federal employees have a voice at the worksite – including workers who belong to the union and those who do not. Employee representatives use official time to enhance working conditions, such as establishing telework policies, improving workplace safety, and arranging for training and educational opportunities. Official time also is used to protect employees from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation and other factors unrelated to their job performance. Official time saves taxpayers money by helping resolve workplace conflicts as early as possible, without resorting to expensive and time-consuming administrative or legal fights.

Union representatives are not allowed to use official time to conduct union-specific business, such as soliciting members, holding internal union meetings, electing union officers, or engaging in partisan political activities, per the *Civil Service Reform Act of 1978*.

Official time is a win for agencies, government employees, and most importantly the taxpayers they serve. We urge you to Vote No on the *Official Time Reform Act of 2017* (H.R. 1364) and H.R. 1293.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations