

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
S-220, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

As you work to develop legislation in the coming weeks to further respond to the COVID-19 crisis, we are writing to strongly urge you to include funding and a directive for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to develop a system and procedures for conducting union representation elections electronically.

During the COVID-19 crisis, it's more important than ever that workers have the right to organize to form unions and have a strong voice on the job if they so choose. Workers across the country are now being forced into horrifying circumstances like unemployment, underemployment, or working in dangerous conditions, often without proper safety equipment and standards. Especially in these conditions, workers must have the right to have a meaningful say in their working conditions and standards.

Yet, at the same time, COVID-19 has also made it extraordinarily difficult for workers to form unions. The need for physical distancing wherever possible makes it impractical for in-person representation elections to take place in many situations. Meanwhile, a number of employers have objected to holding mail ballot elections since the crisis started. In this context, it makes no sense to deny workers access to a safe and efficient process for conducting representation elections.

Therefore, we urge you to correct a mistake made in past legislation that precludes NLRB representation elections from being held electronically. Indeed, the National Mediation Board has successfully held representation elections electronically for over a decade. The next COVID-19 response bill must include funding and direction to implement the changes needed for the NLRB to adopt an electronic representation election process.

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Communications Workers of America (CWA)

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)
International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
National Education Association (NEA)
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Transport Workers Union of America (TWU)
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
United Steelworkers (USW)

Cc:

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and Labor
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions