



January 13, 2022

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, and the millions of American children and families we serve, I write in strong support of the House Amendment to the Senate Amendment to H.R. 5746, the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act. This bill will ensure that voters can safely and freely cast their ballots, protect against election sabotage, stop partisan gerrymandering, and limit the influence of dark money in politics.

The need to prevent voter subversion while re-establishing and strengthening the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is more pressing than ever before. The country also has a right to see where all its representatives stand on the fundamental right of the people to decide who represents us in the halls of power.

H.R. 5746 combines provisions from the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. The Freedom to Vote Act would enable the most comprehensive voting reform in decades. It would establish rules for federal elections; require automatic registration of any eligible voter, making voting easier and more accessible; prohibit harassment and intimidation of election workers; ban partisan gerrymandering; strengthen election cybersecurity; better defend elections from foreign interference; and provide vital funding for elections. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore long-established federal voting rights protections and prevent new state voter suppression measures from being enacted.

In 2021 alone, 19 states enacted 34 new laws that restrict access to the ballot box, and more are under consideration today. Candidates are running for top election offices peddling Donald Trump's "big lie." States are passing racially gerrymandered maps that dilute the power of Black and Latino voters. This legislation would fight back against all these attacks and ensure the ability of every American to participate in safe, accessible and transparent elections. If we care about our democracy and our way of life, we can no longer sit idly by. H.R. 5746 will ensure the right to vote is protected for all Americans.

The late Rep. John Lewis once said, "The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in our democracy." Protecting our democratic principles is patriotic, not partisan. Our responsibility as citizens is not

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Nurses and Health
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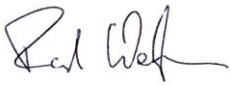


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just to vote, it is to stand up so that everyone who is eligible can vote and every vote is counted. The bedrock of American democracy is participation at the ballot box for all, no matter their religion, their race, their income, their gender, their age, where they come from, what state they reside in or their ZIP code. The procedures of a democratic institution should help preserve, not undermine, the principles of our democracy.

I urge you to take the steps needed to pass H.R. 5746 without any delay. Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Randi Weingarten
President, American Federation of Teachers

RW : emc opeiu #2 afl-cio