

National Union News

GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZING COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER



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AFT Presidential Endorsement

by Amanda Levitt

As union members we have the ability to use our collective voice for a greater purpose. During the 2020 Presidential Election, our parent union, the American Federation of Teachers, is working diligently to democratically decide who we will endorse for president.

GEOC has asked for a referendum that would allow for members from every local to vote for who they believe would support the mission of AFT at national and local levels.

Learn more at aftvotes.org

Help Private University Grads Keep Their Union Rights

by John Ware

Working as a GTA is a job. The University pays us a salary to provide a valuable service: teaching, grading, tutoring, running labs and discussion sections, supervising clinical trainees. That's why we come together as employees to fight for respect at work and to improve our lives and our families' lives. But the enemies of unions, looking for a way to deny us our rights and prevent us from negotiating with our employers, have argued for decades that graduate students can't really be workers at all. In Michigan, that's why the GEOC contract doesn't cover Graduate

Research Assistants, leaving them with less protection and often with even lower pay than is allowed for GTAs and GSAs.

Now the National Labor Relations Board, which makes rules for unions at non-government employers, has proposed to exclude all graduate workers at private universities from "employee" status. This is a reversal of a decision by the Board in 2016, before its members were replaced by new anti-union Trump appointees. If the new rule goes through, private universities will not be required to negotiate with

their graduate unions, making it much harder for our colleagues to protect themselves from harassment, defend their health insurance, and so on. We can help private universities grads keep their union rights by submitting comments opposing the NLRB's rule change.

Please take a few minutes to write a unique comment using the guide at:

AFTacadmics.org/WEAREWORKERS.

Bill to Change Allocation of Green Cards Among Highly-Educated Workers

by Sarah Walker

Early in the 19-20 school year, GEOC and AFT-MI wrote to Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, urging

them to dissent to the language of S.386, the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019".

S.386 would redistribute the vast majority of Green Cards for highly-educated workers to severely backlogged nations like India. The waiting list for these nations is unfairly long, but we worry this policy would severely limit the number of Green Cards for immigrants from other countries, so we instead support increasing the total number of green cards distributed. them to dissent to the language of S.386, the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019".

