



December 4, 2014

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), I urge you to oppose the Preventing Executive Overreach on Immigration Act (H.R. 5759). The bill, sponsored by Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), would prevent the implementation of President Obama's Nov. 20 executive action on immigration. The executive action would provide protection to millions of aspiring Americans, keep families together and expand our economy. It is a measure that should be supported by all Americans. Removing the protections granted in the action would subject nearly 5 million immigrants and their families to the fear of separation and deportation.

Congress should not support legislation that attempts to block President Obama's executive action, which would begin to fix our broken immigration system that has hurt millions of students and families. AFT members across the country continue to hear heartbreaking stories of kids who don't know if their parents are coming home or have been deported. We hear from teachers whose students stop showing up for school after their parents are sent to a country these children have never called home. The president's executive action would end the separation of families where parents of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents are waiting for legal permanent resident status, and will expand provisional waivers to limit the time families must be separated while they attend visa interviews. This will create greater stability for children, who won't have to fear that their families will be ripped apart. That kind of stability leads to better academic performance and opportunity and should be supported.

In addition, support for H.R. 5759 will prevent millions of undocumented immigrants from becoming taxpayers. It will mean that undocumented workers will not have to pass national security and criminal background checks. It will prevent economic growth that would increase the wages and productivity of American workers—and ultimately reduce the deficit. In addition, unscrupulous employers who often pay undocumented workers under the table will have to pay their fair share of payroll taxes.

Every Democrat and Republican president during the past 50 years has taken executive action on immigration. The president has the legal authority to take these

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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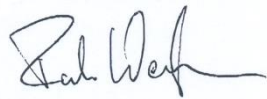
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actions under the Constitution and the Immigration and Nationality Act. This authority should not be questioned because of partisan politics.

H.R. 5759 does nothing to fix our immigration system. A better course of action would be passing the bipartisan Senate immigration reform bill. The AFT, along with our allies, has been pressing for congressional action since the Senate passed its legislation. President Obama—as he did with the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and as many of his predecessors have done—acted because Congress did not, and is using his legal authority to secure our nation’s borders, to help keep families together and to expand our economy.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Randi Weingarten
President

RW:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio