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April 26, 2017

Dear Student Employees at The New School,

I understand that on May 3rd and 4th you will be voting in an election to determine whether graduate student workers at The New School will have the right to union representation.

It is not my intention to tell you how to vote in that election. That is your decision. What I will tell you, however, is that I have had the opportunity of working with thousands of workers across the country who are members of unions – including many who work in the field of education. These include the full-time and adjunct faculty at the University of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges, RA's and TA's at Columbia University, and public school teachers – among others.

These workers formed their unions to improve the conditions of their employment. What forming a union means is that you and your co-workers will have the opportunity to sit down as legal equals with management to negotiate a legally binding contract covering all aspects of your wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Nationally, unionized workers make wages that are on average 27 percent more than non-union workers, with significantly better benefits and working conditions. Having a union ends the arrangement where the employer makes all the decisions unilaterally, and institutes a legal process where your union organization collectively bargains with the employer regarding the issues you have identified as needing improvement.

I respect the critical work you do every day, and wish you the very best in your efforts to create a democratic workplace where your voice can really be heard.

Sincerely,

BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR