

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 4, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:


We write to express our concerns regarding President Trump's January 29, 2020, Memorandum to the Department of Defense (DOD), "Delegation of Certain Authority under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute." We support efforts that strengthen our national security, however this Memorandum represents a serious incursion on federal employees' collective bargaining rights and sets a dangerous precedent in suggesting that those rights somehow compromise our national security. We urge you to exercise great restraint in using this new authority and continue to maintain the historically productive relationship that DOD has with its employee unions.

The Department of Defense has successfully bargained with its unionized workers under various arrangements since 1962, and DOD civilian employees have been included in the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute since its inception in 1978. During that time, America has been engaged in many international conflicts and national emergencies. There is no evidence that the presence of unionized employees has ever had any negative impact on DOD's national security mission. In fact, DOD and its unions have always had a mutually beneficial partnership. Unions have helped draw attention to health and safety hazards, as well as instances of waste, fraud, and abuse on the part of contractors. Moreover, a unionized workforce allows DOD to recruit and retain highly-skilled employees who might otherwise work elsewhere. In short, we believe that the Department's unionized workforce has enhanced our security, not detracted from it. President Trump's Memorandum arbitrarily and needlessly threatens this positive relationship.

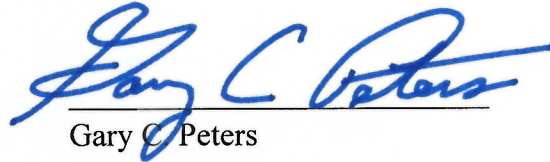
The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute of 1978 is the cornerstone of our civil service, and it clearly states that labor organizations and collective bargaining in the federal sector "safeguards the public interest." Stripping long-included employees of the statute's protections is counterproductive to DOD's national security mission, and the President's Memorandum fails to articulate why such a drastic change is necessary. We strongly discourage you from taking steps to eliminate the statutorily-granted collective bargaining rights of DOD civilians.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

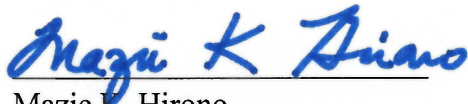
Sincerely,



Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services



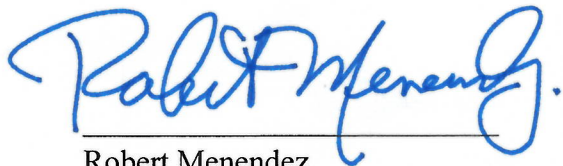
Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



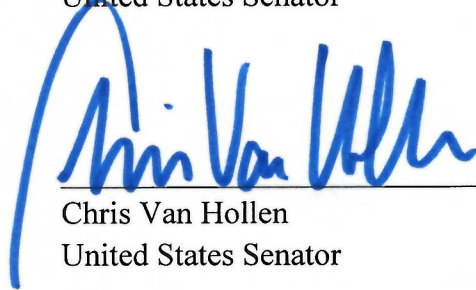
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



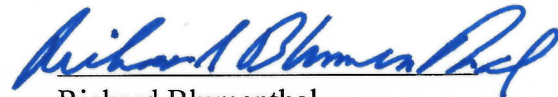
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



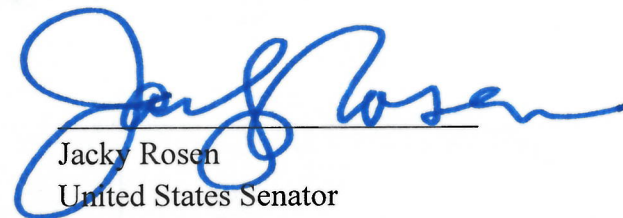
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



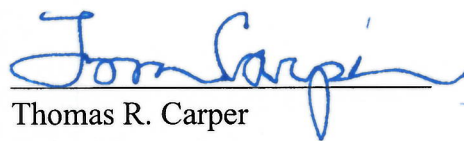
Patty Murray
United States Senator



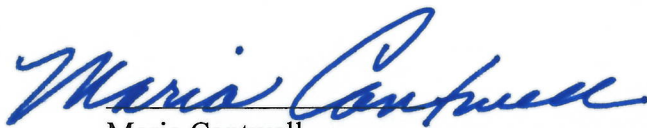
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



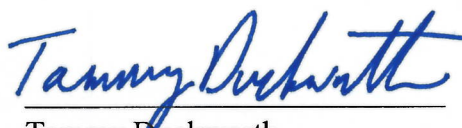
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



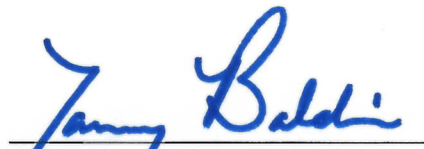
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



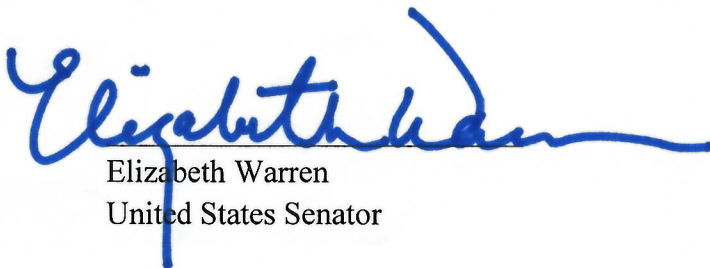
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



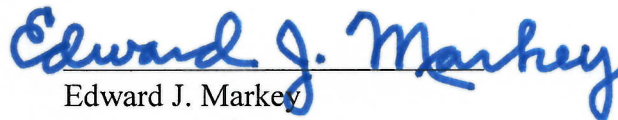
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



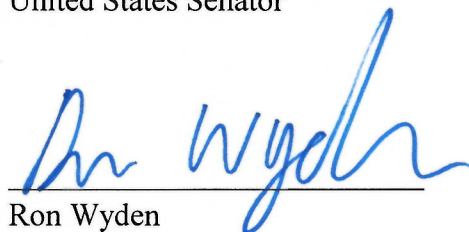
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



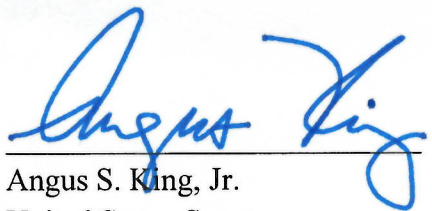
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



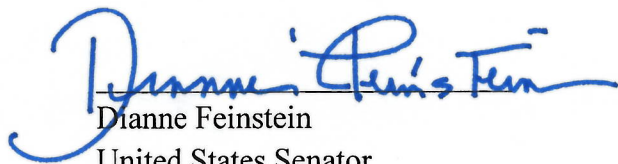
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



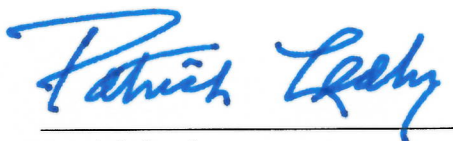
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



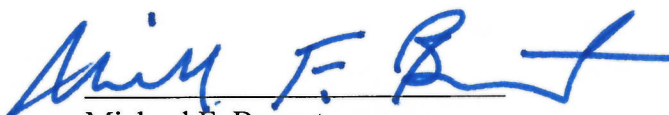
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



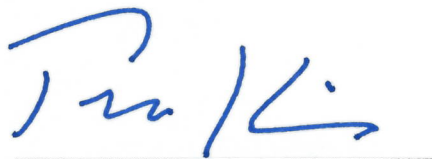
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



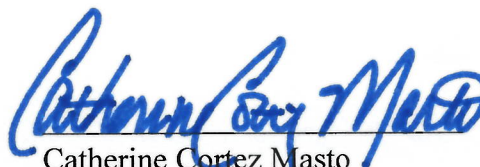
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



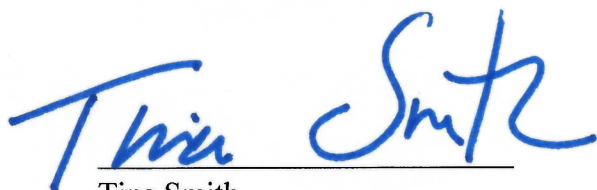
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



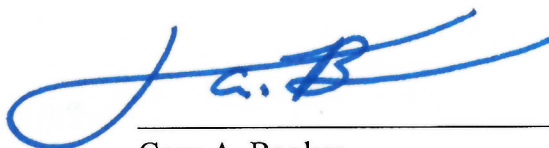
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



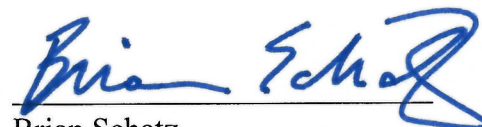
Tina Smith
United States Senator



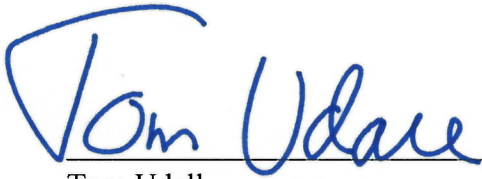
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



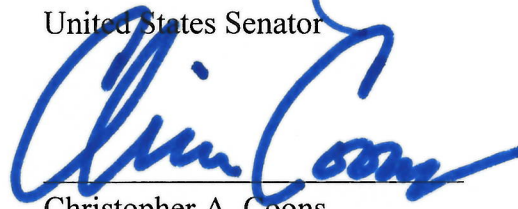
Tom Udall
United States Senator



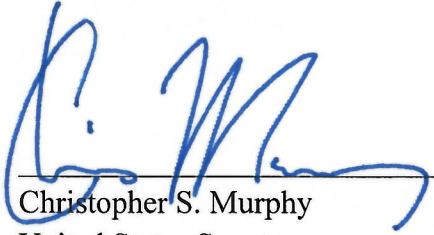
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



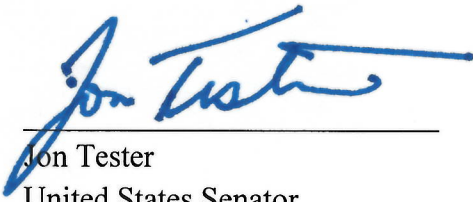
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



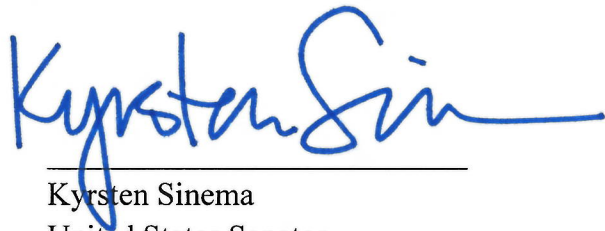
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



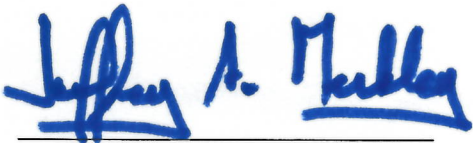
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator