

BERNARD SANDERS
VERMONT

COMMITTEES:
BUDGET, RANKING MEMBER
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND
PENSIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4504

332 SENATE DIRKSEN OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5141
1 CHURCH STREET, 3RD FLOOR
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
(802) 862-0697
1 (800) 339-9834
www.sanders.senate.gov

December 2, 2016

Dear Columbia University Research and Teaching Assistants:

I understand that on December 7th and 8th you will be voting in an election to determine whether TAs and RAs at Columbia will have the right to union representation. I had the pleasure of meeting with a number of you in September, and am strongly supportive of your efforts to hold a free and fair union election.

It is my hope that you will join the more than 35,000 UAW RAs and TAs across the country who collectively bargain for higher pay, more robust benefits, and greater workplace rights. 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 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, 28% 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 am glad you are working to move our country forward and create a better future for workers everywhere. I wish you the very best in your efforts to create a democratic workplace where your voice can really be heard.

Sincerely,



BERNIE SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR