

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 2, 2016

Lee C. Bollinger  
President  
Columbia University  
116th Street & Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Mr. Bollinger,

Year after year, Columbia University conducts cutting edge research and educates students who will become the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, inventors, creators, scholars and beyond. Columbia is an important economic engine in New York City, fueled in part by the work of countless research and teaching assistants (RAs and TAs).

We have long supported the right of RAs and TAs to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing. The recent decision by the National Labor Relations Board in Columbia University (Case 02-RC-143012) affirms this right.

We urge the University administration to commit to the following when RAs and TAs seek union representation:

- Refrain from any actions that would delay the right to choose collective bargaining;
- Ensure a free and fair election on unionization by committing to a process that is open, transparent and free from intimidation or threats as RAs and TAs consider their decision whether or not to favor union representation;
- If a majority elects union representation, commence good-faith negotiations for a contract immediately upon confirmation of a majority vote by RAs and TAs in favor of union representation.

TAs and RAs play a critical role in our teaching and research programs. Collective bargaining between University administrators and the representatives chosen by RAs and TAs will allow for an orderly process for employees to ensure positive working conditions and to resolve disputes consistent with traditions of academic freedom and the highest quality teaching, learning and research.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator