

Mary Reynolds
Chair
GESO
425 College Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

VIA EMAIL

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

I am writing to express my support for the efforts of graduate student teachers at Yale to gain union recognition from the university. I know this has been a long term effort, and I congratulate you all on your persistence because it is such an important undertaking.

Many universities, like Yale, are increasingly relying on graduate students to teach undergraduates. My own university does this as well. The reasons are obvious. Universities save money by hiring temporary and part-time workers, just as other organizations have been doing. But growing numbers of unprotected teachers are likely to undermine the mission of universities, including their commitment to good teaching, and to academic freedom.

Even if this were not so, it seems to me that the right to organize and bargain collectively is fundamental to democratic relations in our complex society. The obduracy with which Yale has resisted the graduate teachers quest for union rights therefore remains so puzzling that it has attracted notice across the university world. I entirely support your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Frances Fox Piven
Distinguished Professor
Of Political Science and Sociology