

April 15, 2005

Dear President Levin,

We the undersigned faculty of the Yale Sociology Department join the American Sociological Association in recognizing that 260,000 teaching and research assistants are currently identified by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the higher educational instructional workforce, and that in 2000 the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) unanimously held that graduate employees at New York University (NYU) are employees entitled to organize for collective bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

We also recognize that on July 13, 2004 the NLRB by a 3-2 vote overruled the NYU decision in the case of Brown University, ruling that universities are not legally required under the NLRA to recognize their graduate teaching and research assistants as unionized employees. We concur with the statement by the dissenting members of the Board that this decision is “woefully out of touch with contemporary academic reality . . . seeing the academic world as somehow removed from the economic realm that labor law addresses.”

We believe that when graduate student teaching and research assistants vote to exercise collective bargaining rights, they deserve our recognition and support. We therefore urge you to recognize the Graduate Employees and Students Organization (GESO) at Yale, which on December 14, 2004, in a public petition certified by Connecticut Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz, demonstrated 60% support.

Sincerely,

Faculty Members, Department of Sociology, Yale University

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