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April 12, 2017

Dear Vanderbilt faculty member:

I understand that you and your colleagues will vote on whether non-tenure track faculty workers at Vanderbilt University will have the right to union representation.

It is not my intention to tell you how to vote in that election. That is your decision to make. What I will tell you is that I have had the opportunity to collaborate with thousands of workers across our country who are members of unions – including many in the field of education. These workers formed unions to improve the conditions of their employment, and to have a greater voice. For them, forming a union means that they now have the opportunity to sit down as equals with management to negotiate a legally binding contract covering all aspects of their wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Nationally, on average, union workers earn 27% more than non-union workers, and they have significantly better benefits and working conditions. Having a union ends the arrangement where an employer unilaterally makes all the decisions and calls all the shots. Rather, unionized workers have the legal right to collectively bargain with the employer regarding the issues they have identified as needing attention or improvement.

I respect the critical work you do every day, and wish you the best in your efforts to create a democratic workplace where your voice can really be heard.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator