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April 28, 2022

Irene Mulvey, President AAUP
American Association of University Professors
1133 19th St. N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

Dear President Mulvey:

At our AFT leader meeting in Chicago in April, AAUP Secretary-Treasurer Chris Sinclair asked me how the AFT could support AAUP locals facing the onslaught of extremist attacks lodged against university faculty and institutions of higher education. Of course, I replied that “we’re all in.”

To me, this is the true value of joining together, whether it’s an individual joining a union or two unions affiliating with each other: the strength and collective power we create when we stand in solidarity with one another, especially in times of great strife. Together, we can accomplish far more than we could alone. Together, we have one another’s backs.

In this moment, that collective power has never been more critical. The right wing has admitted that its aim is to “lay siege” to our institutions. Its political strategy hinges on disrupting our institutions—including unions, higher education institutions and educators—and painting them as radical, dangerous, and a threat to traditional norms and values. Of course, there is ample research that shows us this isn’t true: The majority of Americans support labor unions and approve of public education and accessible, affordable higher education; thankfully, most Americans don’t want to see books banned or curriculums whitewashed. We need not just to fight but to fight forward. Our power lies, in part, in lifting up the good work our affiliates do that showcases that support, and our power lies in what we do when a sibling is under attack.

Below are just some of the ways the AFT engages with our affiliates, supports their work and assists them through crises. These programs allow the AFT to fund strategic campaigns—including research, communications, organizing and legal support, when necessary—that are designed in collaboration with the chapters to fight back against attacks from external and internal threats. Our programs often

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.



include involvement from state and national leaders and the expertise of staff from across the union.

STATES and LOCALS IN CRISIS

Should an AFT-affiliated local union face an especially challenging situation where its ability to represent its members is under significant and extraordinary attack, the union may ask the AFT president to declare it an AFT "local in crisis." (Examples of crises for locals have included: when the Long Island University Brooklyn administration locked out faculty during contract negotiations, the first higher education lockout in the country; when the accreditation of San Francisco Community College was threatened; and when there was the potential for a statewide strike of University of California lecturers.) An AFT staff support team coordinated by a manager in the AFT's department of organization and field services, in direct communication with the AFT president, would bring to bear a wide range of staff supports (field, strategic research, communications, government relations, human rights and community relations, legal, and constituency) appropriate to the special challenge. There would be coordination of supports with the AFT state federation. Financial support would be available as well.

We have the resources needed to wage these fightbacks; \$1.20 of each member's per capita per month is set aside in part for locals in crisis work.

This was a program I pressed for in 2010. Requests for local in crisis status come directly to the president. I would propose that any requests for LIC status from AAUP legacy chapters would go to the national AAUP and that the AAUP and AFT presidents would make a joint decision on LIC status and resource commitment.

MILITANCY/DEFENSE FUND

The Militancy/Defense Fund supports many areas of the AFT's work. It goes directly back to affiliates to support their efforts to protect the rights of our members and protect the services they provide—from countering right-wing efforts like the *Janus* case and the dozens of lawsuits promulgated by the Kochs, the DeVos family and others in the aftermath of *Janus*, to confronting efforts to defund and dismantle public education and target teachers, to our legal advocacy taking on loan servicers like Navient and former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos for efforts to sabotage the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

Grants may go to:

- Assist in the payment of legal fees and expenses incurred in or resulting from a strike, including the legal defense of individual members dismissed or otherwise disciplined because of involvement in a strike.

- Assist in the payment of subsistence in an amount not to exceed \$250/week after the first week of incarceration of an AFT member who is deprived of their regular salary because they are incarcerated for strike activity.
- Assist in the payment of fines and penalties levied against locals and members as a result of strike activity.
- Grants for locals in strike situations, emergency assistance subject to justification.
- Up to one year of payment of interest on loans to members while on strike for at least five days after one pay day is missed, up to a maximum loan of \$300/week.
- Matters pertaining to violations of academic freedom, enforcement of tenure rights, defense against termination and demotion actions, threats to job security, enforcement of civil rights and union leadership rights, court enforcement and defense of arbitration.

Every month, 95 cents of each member's per capita is set aside for the AFT Militancy/Defense Fund. An annual financial report of the Militancy/Defense Fund is provided to the AFT executive council and to the AFT convention to ensure an adequate reserve to pay anticipated strike benefits.

Applications for AFT Militancy/Defense Fund assistance are available at the AFT and the AAUP.

SOLIDARITY FUND

The Solidarity Fund is the cornerstone of our union's political strength at every level of the union. It supports our work in the field—from engaging members around key issues, to campaign support, to defeating dangerous ballot measures at the state and local levels.

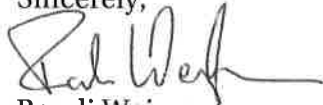
The Solidarity Fund was created in 2002 to help states counter initiatives and campaigns that seek to weaken public education, public services, bargaining rights, healthcare and retirement security. The Solidarity Fund receives money through an allocation from a specific portion of dues set aside for the fund (\$2.70 of each member's per capita per month). And that allocation is shared between the national union and the state affiliates.

State affiliates can receive their allocation from the Solidarity Fund by completing a state affiliate application, which includes a legal opinion establishing a state Solidarity Fund account, and passing a resolution at the state level. The state receives its allocation on a quarterly basis.

In the cases of state fights with national implications, state affiliates may request additional funds through the national Solidarity Fund. In such cases, state affiliates must complete a detailed application and submit it to the AFT for consideration. The final approval will be made by the AFT executive council. Again, on issues involving legacy AAUP chapters, the AAUP president must be part of the decision-making process.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Randi Weingarten

President

RW : cw