Dear Chair Hamilton, Member Puchala, and Member Sweatt:

We are writing to express our concern about the number of ongoing, protracted contract negotiations between parties before the National Mediation Board. As you know, there are thousands of workers across the country who are currently being subjected to drawn out contract negotiations, and we urge you to use the tools at your disposal to ensure the timely resolution of these cases.

First, we want to acknowledge the work of the National Mediation Board (NMB) in dealing with the unprecedented level of bargaining in recent years due to pent-up demand from delayed bargaining during COVID. With the NMB’s assistance, most of these negotiations are settled, demonstrating the professionalism and hard work of the Board and your staff. We are committed to providing you the resources to do your job moving forward.

However, we are concerned about the increasing number of contract negotiations before the NMB that are being unfairly drawn out to the detriment of workers. We understand that there are certain ongoing negotiations that have dragged on for as long as five years, and we have heard from workers who are justifiably concerned that they are being subjected to unfair delays in the bargaining process. For example, we know that over 100,000 flight attendants are currently in contract negotiations, many of whom are working under the terms of contracts that are now several years past the contract amendable dates. Furthermore, many of these workers were on the frontlines throughout the Covid pandemic and made countless sacrifices to keep their companies financially afloat, and it is important that they are able to reap the benefits of the collective bargaining process in a timely manner.

We are also concerned that the reason for these increasingly prolonged negotiations is due in part to the recent inability of workers to avail themselves of self-help options to facilitate labor disputes. It has long been understood that the best way to achieve labor peace is through collective bargaining backed by the threat of “self-help” for both parties, including the right to strike for workers. Indeed, workers across a range of professions have secured groundbreaking new contracts in recent years, many of which were won due to workers’ credible ability to exercise self-help options.

But, over recent decades, workers’ ability to utilize self-help options has been eroded. In fact, there have only been two releases to strike of airline workers since 2006, the last being
Spirit Airlines Pilots in 2010, compared to dozens in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, management has little incentive to reach agreements with their workers in a timely manner and many companies have used this development to their advantage, resulting in interminable negotiations and unnecessary labor strife. This strains the resources of the NMB while delaying much-needed improvements in the lives of tens of thousands of frontline workers.

Accordingly, we urge the Board to use all of the tools at its disposal to encourage the resolution of disputes with ratified agreements that are long overdue.

Thank you for your diligent work to resolve disputes and please continue that work knowing that we support your efforts and use of the statute to encourage settlement of contract disputes.

Sincerely,

Melanie A. Stansbury
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Val Hoyle
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Summer Lee
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress
Rosa L. DeLauro 
Member of Congress

Katie Porter 
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas 
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee 
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. 
Member of Congress

Robert Garcia 
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Dwight Evans 
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Adriano Espaillat 
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Linda T. Sánchez 
Member of Congress
Nikki Budzinski  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Becca Balint  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross  
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Member of Congress

Mary Sattler Peltola  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Jason Crow
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Brad Sherman
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Steve Cohen
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Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Josh Harder
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress

Jr. Tokuda  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
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Gerald E. Connolly  
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Lizzie Fletcher  
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Jamie Raskin  
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
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Sylvia R. Garcia  
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Eric Sorensen  
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Thomas R. Suozzi  
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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
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Lauren Underwood  
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Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.  
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Ed Case  
Member of Congress
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Glenn Ivey
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Ritchie Torres
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Darren Soto
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John P. Sarbanes
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Lloyd Doggett
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Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress
Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress

Amna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress
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Sacrificed to Make America Great

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress

Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Gabe Amo
Member of Congress