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February 20, 2020

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my concern on behalf of America's Metal Trades unions about the January 29, 2020, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense regarding collective bargaining that was recently promulgated.

More than 40,000 metal trades wage grade employees work civilian jobs for the Department of Defense. They are a vital part of our national security fabric and help defend our nation or assist those who do. They are dedicated to the Department's mission and an integral part of the Department's successes. This new memorandum provides the Secretary of Defense and other department officials with the blanket authority to waive the collective bargaining rights of all of these employees.

Metal Trades workers are patriots that agree that the Department of Defense requires flexibility to respond to the challenges that our nation faces. However, collective bargaining is not only compatible with this needed flexibility, but can be a key component in preserving it by giving employees a voice in the system and providing avenues for management to receive feedback.

A fair collective bargaining process is a cornerstone of American labor law and a right afforded to employees within the federal government. Any exemptions permitted need to be carefully considered. In fact, not a single president has found it necessary or even considered issuing a blanket exemption of all Department of Defense employees from collective bargaining since the enactment of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

The Metal Trades Unions of America have a long history of working cooperatively with the Department of Defense in the best interest of our country and mission. We encourage the Administration and the Department to continue this cooperation and preserve longstanding protections for federal employees. I urge you to reconsider this memorandum and work to protect the collective bargaining rights of the employees of the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,

James Hart
President