

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 23, 2016

Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust
Office of the President
Harvard University
Massachusetts Hall
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

Dear President Faust:

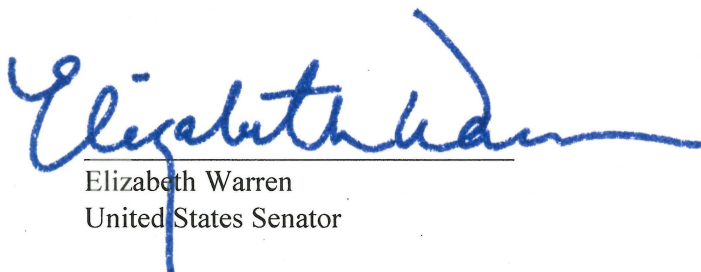
At Harvard, and at universities around the country, graduate student research assistants and teaching assistants are an invaluable part of their school communities. As teaching assistants for Harvard courses, graduate students play a critical role in ensuring that our nation's young people are prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead. And as research assistants, Harvard graduate students are an essential part of producing the basic research that will help us to solve some of society's most pressing problems.

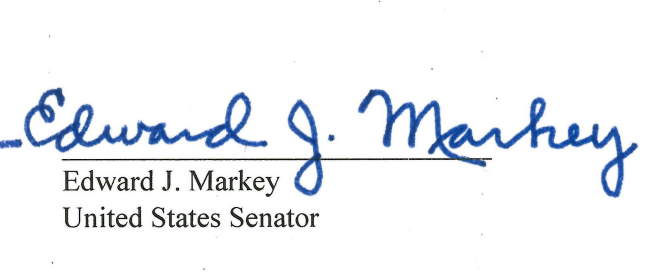
For decades, U.S. labor law has protected the rights of workers to organize. This critical labor protection has been central to building our nation's middle class and growing our economy, and it has helped create safe and fair working conditions for millions of American workers. In this particular case, we understand that the National Labor Relations Board has not issued a ruling acknowledging and codifying graduate assistants' from private universities right to organize in the fullest sense of the phrase. Indeed, the NLRB has made several rulings in recent history that have left graduate students' rights to collectively bargain somewhat unclear.

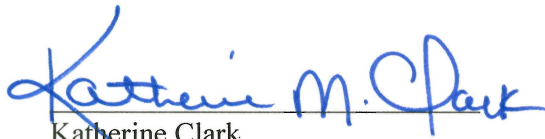
It is, however, clear that universities have the option of recognizing collective bargaining units among their graduate assistants if these students wish to organize. While we understand that Harvard may prefer to await a decision from the NLRB that would force the university to permit students to organize, we urge Harvard to offer this consideration to its teaching and research assistants now, as Harvard is clearly entitled to do. University administrators worldwide look to Harvard as a model for their own universities. If Harvard welcomes graduate research and teaching assistants who desire to organize for improved workplace policies, a new standard of care may emerge.

The work of Harvard graduate student research and teaching assistants helps to make Harvard a world leader academically. They are part of what makes Harvard an important economic engine in Cambridge and Greater Boston. Respecting the wishes of these students to form a collective bargaining organization will help these students continue this important work well into the future.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress