



The hill we climb to heal and unite

Sisters and Brothers:

Like many others, I was inspired and moved by the words of 22-year-old youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman, when she delivered her poem “The Hill We Climb” during the presidential inauguration. Her poem was hopeful and a message to us all. Here is a passage that meant a lot to me:

*“We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside”*

This amazing young woman’s words recognize the deep divide that separates many of us and challenges us all to overcome it. This is so important to me as president of our union, because we cannot succeed in our mission to advocate for the majority of workers if we are wasting any of our time fighting each other.

Our union empowers us to come together to advocate and fight against those powerful interests who seek to do us harm and oppress us. By uniting, we use our people power to combat their power, money and influence, to tip the scales in favor of working women and men. Those who oppose unions, who want to take more out of your pockets will do

everything they can to divide and conquer. We must do everything we can to unite and overcome.

It’s not easy when we represent such a diverse group of workers, with differing socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, racial and ethnic identities, religious and political beliefs, and geographic locations, just to name a few. We have to work harder to find the things that we have in common, that we can all unite around.

This past year saw something of a tipping point when people of all colors rose up and joined together, around our country and the world, protesting against structural racism and standing up for the inherent value of human life, no matter your skin color. This gives me hope for our future, that we can unite. People are examining issues like structural racism and having difficult conversations to try and create a more equitable and just society. Many of us are committed to making positive changes that will do so, healing the wounds of generations. I hope you will join me in this work. In the further beautiful words of Amanda Gorman,

*“We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next
generation”*

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary E. Sullivan, President