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## The National Endowment for Democracy Unionizes with OPEIU Local 2

**Washington, DC** - Over 87% of employees at the National Endowment for Democracy voted to join the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 2 on Wednesday, October 30th.

The victory comes after three other DC-based international grant-making organizations unionized with Local 2, two of which joined over the past fifteen months: PartnersGlobal (March 2019), the National Democratic Institute (August 2018), and the Solidarity Center (1990s). The bargaining unit will also be represented by [Nonprofit Employees United](#), an affiliate of OPEIU with thousands of members working in advocacy and social service across the country. These newest Local 2 members are program and grant officers, compliance experts, auditors, researchers, communications specialists, public affairs officers, journalists, and more.

The 150 employees at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) have been organizing a union for the last ten months, looking to improve organizational transparency, achieve collective bargaining power, and ensure that the democratic values they espouse abroad are similarly observed in their own workplace. The organization, a private nonprofit that funds democratic grants internationally, has focused on human and labor rights abroad since its founding in 1983. The newest members of Local 2 want to make sure NED remains committed to its core principles. As explained by Rula Jamous, Senior Grants Officer, “To quote my mother, we are best when we move away from an individualized and arbitrary decision making process to a collective and transparent one. Without a formal collective unit, there was no mechanism for such participation, and so a union was the logical and rational answer.”

While some of the obstacles NED employees face vary depending on which department they work in, the excitement around the win was widespread. “It’s been so meaningful to be a small part of the organizing effort and to put my values into practice in the workplace. I’m so proud of the work we’ve done to make this happen,” said Alex Steiner, Program Assistant for the Eurasia team at NED. “We’re excited to see how collective bargaining will make a difference at the place we work everyday.”

What will the bargaining process look like? The unit knows that there’s a lot left to be done to win a contract, but they are actively trying to maintain high levels of participation in the effort. “I believe a union will not only create better job safeguards, but will also help build by-in,” says Jamous. “When people know they have a stake in the system, they are more likely to engage.”

**About OPEIU Local 2**

The Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 2 represents 8,000 members throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Our union includes everyone workers from healthcare companies, nonprofits, labor and credit unions, security companies, transportation companies, and more. We negotiate and enforce contracts, organize and train our members, and develop leadership that extends beyond the workplace. We are constantly working to defend and advocate for not only our members' rights, but for the rights of all working people as well.

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