

# NEA ESP Bill of Rights TOOLKIT

An organizing movement to build ESP  
Recognition, Respect, and Power

**1** One job  
should be  
enough.

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS



**NEA** proudly recognizes the exceptional leadership, dedication, and contributions of the following **ESP** members and staff whose work has been instrumental in advancing the **ESP Bill of Rights**:

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# Background and Toolkit Purpose

Across the country, day in and day out, dedicated Education Support Professionals (ESPs) keep our public schools running and our students thriving. They are bus drivers greeting students and transporting them safely, paraeducators supporting and inspiring students, custodians keeping spaces clean and safe, food service professionals feeding students, and much more.

Despite playing such a vital role, ESPs are chronically underpaid, undervalued, and rarely given a voice in the workplace, and that must change. One job should be enough!

## Who are ESPs?



Of ESPs are heads of household



Rely on federal benefits like Medicaid or SNAP



Are women



Of full-time ESPs earn less than \$25,000/year



Are people of color



States pay ESPs a living wage

We can change the environment for ESPs by working together with families and communities to demand respect, fair pay, good benefits, safe working conditions, and a real seat at the table. Together, we're building power through the **NEA ESP Bill of Rights movement**, a nationwide effort to secure the dignity and recognition ESPs deserve.

The ESP Bill of Rights isn't just a slogan—it's a movement built by ESPs, for ESPs. This is so much more than a campaign. It is about **shifting how our schools and communities recognize and value ESPs**. And it starts with you.

### This toolkit provides the following:

- The What: an overview of the ESP Bill of Rights concept and campaign
- The When: the history of the movement and proof of concept—real wins from campaigns across the country
- The How: a step-by-step action plan to guide your campaign with practical strategies.



*"We're not just aids. We're everything when it comes to those kids. We get our lunch and a 15 minute break. So we're not with them for 45 minutes, the rest of the day it's us."*

- Gina Lozano, Therapeutic Day School Worker, Illinois

# What is an **ESP Bill of Rights**

The NEA ESP Bill of Rights is a movement led by NEA ESP members to build recognition, respect, and power. It is an organizing tool to reshape the way ESP members are seen, heard, valued, and respected in their communities. The NEA ESP Bill of Rights is a framework to create positive change for the people who create opportunities for students and make our schools run, as well as for the students ESPs serve.



## A Platform for ESP Voice

An ESP Bill of Rights is a way to give ESPs a strong voice by **identifying, capturing, and sharing their biggest concerns and priorities**. It starts with genuine conversations: listening sessions, 10-minute worksite meetings, listening tours, informational sessions at conferences and events, surveys, and one-on-one conversations to inform the direction and strategy of the campaign.

## A Powerful Organizing Tool

At its core, this is an **organizing campaign**. When we center this work around shared issues, we expand what's possible: we can identify and recruit new members, engage current members, and empower ESP members to be union activists. The campaign fosters relationships that strengthen our union today and well into the future. **This is about building lasting power—not just winning one fight.**



## A Step Toward Racial, Social, and Economic Justice

Economic justice is foundational to racial and social justice. Addressing pay inequity and lack of respect in the workplace for ESPs is essential to correcting the inherent classism and discrimination in the education system. Nearly half of all ESPs identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color, and the majority are women. Many are also part of the LGBTQ+ community or are trusted allies. ESPs reflect the communities and students they serve. Their fight for fair wages, respect, and safety is inseparable from the fight for justice in our schools. **When ESPs win, entire communities win.**

## A Leadership Pipeline

An ESP Bill of Rights campaign secures better conditions AND it develops leaders. Through the campaign, **new ESP leaders emerge, and experienced leaders mentor others**. It's how we grow a sustainable, vibrant movement for now and into the future. An ESP Bill of Rights campaign is about people, about ESPs lifting each other up, sharing stories, and building power together. 🌱 New leaders step forward with courage. 🤝 Experienced ESPs mentor and guide. 🗣️ Communities grow stronger through connection. This is how we build a movement that lasts



*"Support staff are at the tipping point. The ESP Bill of Rights sets the stage for bargaining platforms and negotiations teams to improve our jobs and bring back the pride of serving our communities."*

— Cindy Porter, Special Education Paraprofessional, Maryland

# A ROADMAP TO ACTION

The NEA ESP Bill of Rights is a **strategic roadmap** for affiliates to:



## Strengthen Bargaining Strategies

Create a **clear, coordinated bargaining roadmap**, locally or across a region or state. Bring in partners and allies: parents, students, community members, and other unions to grow the pressure for change.



## Set Legislative and Policy Priorities

Most of the issues at the heart of an ESP Bill of Rights require policy change, which requires intentional, organized advocacy. The ESP Bill of Rights should be used to identify policy priorities, but the union cannot simply rely on turning its desired changes over to policymakers. There must be a **strategic, coordinated effort to advocate** for these changes.



## Build Professional Supports

Identify the professional learning and growth opportunities most important to ESPs and advocate for relevant, paid, high-quality, job-related **professional learning supports catered to ESPs'** needs.



## Grow the Union

At its core, the ESP Bill of Rights is an **organizing tool** to have conversations with members and non-members alike. We know when ESPs concerns are heard and they see their colleagues working to address them, they are more likely to join the union. It also provides great opportunity for leadership development of current members.

# How the ESP Bill of Rights Movement Came to Life

Every powerful movement begins with a spark. For the ESP Bill of Rights, that spark came from ESP members who refused to accept poverty wages as the norm, and it has grown into a movement across the entire country.

2018

To address poverty-level pay, ESP members from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) started a living wage campaign for ESPs, laying the foundation for the first ESP Bill of Rights campaign.

2019

Led by ESP members Jonie Cederholm and Sonia Fortin, MTA formed an ESP Standard Task Force to understand the realities of their working and living conditions. What they found was clear: ESPs needed a Bill of Rights to put their priorities in writing and drive change.

2020

The call was answered when delegates at the MTA Annual Meeting endorsed the MTA ESP Bill of Rights, officially launching a movement and tagline: One job should be enough. MTA's tagline has been adopted by many state campaigns and NEA's national campaign.

2021

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) saw the power of MTA's approach. Two decades after winning collective bargaining rights for ESPs, they needed a renewed push and began crafting their own campaign.

2022

Through statewide listening sessions, they heard hundreds of ESP voices and launched the Maryland ESP Bill of Rights Campaign at their Representative Assembly. Thousands of delegates endorsed it, including the State Superintendent of Schools.

The Illinois Education Association (IEA) ESP Committee, led by ESP members Jill Scarcelli and Debra Ward-Mitchell, began their first listening sessions with ESPs across the state to help inform a statewide campaign.

2023

Illinois launched the IEA Respect Campaign, a unique structure where ESPs, allies, and staff formed working teams to pass legislation, create ESP-specific resources, and support locals in building power.

As Massachusetts, Maryland, and Illinois showed what was possible, NEA President Becky Pringle challenged the NEA ESP Careers Committee to take the vision national.

2024

After gathering input from ESPs across the country, NEA launched the NEA ESP Bill of Rights campaign at the NEA ESP National Conference. The NEA ESP Bill of Rights serves as a guide for states, districts, and locals to build their own campaigns that reflect their unique needs, while connecting to a powerful national movement.

2025/26

18 states are running ESP Bill of Rights campaigns and have seen major gains in salary, member retention and leadership, and overall working conditions. Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Chuy García (D-IL) introduced federal legislation to establish a \$45,000 minimum wage for ESPs. Our national campaign is gaining momentum, and NEA continues to support new states engaging in this work.

# Steps to creating an ESP Bill of Rights

In collaboration with affiliates who have built a campaign from the ground up, NEA has outlined ten recommended steps to build a Bill of Rights campaign in your state or local. These steps will guide you throughout your campaign development and are important to revisit as your campaign progresses. While each affiliate will have a unique process, following these steps should set your campaign up for success.

## Step 1: Expand Knowledge and Set a Shared Vision

This is your movement, built by ESPs, for ESPs, and with the support of NEA and fellow affiliates who have already started their journey. You don't have to figure this out alone.

### Learn about the ESP Bill of Rights

- Listen to NEA's [SchoolMe podcast episode](#)
- [Watch webinars](#) by the Massachusetts, Maryland, and Illinois teams

### Connect with Other States to Learn from Other Campaigns

Reach out to ESP leaders in states that have already started their campaigns. Many have public campaign pages you can review for ideas. Check out some of the pages below:



[marylandeducators.org/espbillofrights](http://marylandeducators.org/espbillofrights)



[massteacher.org/espbillofrights](http://massteacher.org/espbillofrights)



[vtnea.org/billofrights](http://vtnea.org/billofrights)

### Explore National Data

Ground your work in facts. NEA's national ESP data and earnings reports are packed with data that will help you understand the scope of the issues and build a compelling case for action.

[ESP National Data](#)

[NEA ESP Earnings Report](#)

### Define What Success Looks Like

**Start by dreaming big.** This is your vision for a better future; let it guide everything that follows. Take time to imagine both short-term wins and long-term impact. What would a successful campaign look like in your community? What needs to change? What's the bold vision that inspires people to join you?

*"One of the terms we always want to tag to the Bill of Rights is thriving wage. A living wage gets us day-to-day; thriving wage makes it so we can enjoy our lives."*

*— Roy Freeman, Bus Driver, Michigan*



# Step 2: Gain Early Support and Make the Case



*A strong campaign starts with strong backing.*

*The more people understand the*

**“WHY,”**

*the more they will to want be part of it.*

## Get Clear on Your “Why”



Why does this matter to you? Share “your why” in meetings, on social media, in one-on-one conversations, and wherever else you connect with others who care about education.

## Share Success Stories



Stories inspire action far more than statistics alone. Talk about what’s already working in other states (like those listed in Step 1) and stress that success started with people just like you. When people hear what’s possible, they start to believe they can do the same thing.

## Identify your natural allies to support the campaign.



Some examples of allies are:

- State/local board of directors
- State NEA directors
- ESP leaders
- Affiliate committees
- Influential members
- Affiliate staff

## Connect to Organizing



Frame the campaign as a power-building effort, not just a policy wish list. It’s a way to grow membership, develop leaders, and build long-term strength.

## Ask for support—early and often.



Talk to local and state leaders about how they can champion the campaign. Get their buy-in early on to increase interest and influence others to support the campaign. Leadership support ensures that the campaign is aligned with the strategic goals of your affiliate. (Note that you must have approval from your affiliate leadership for NEA’s ESP Quality Department to directly support you in this work.)

Is the affiliate willing to contribute any of the following supports?

- Financial resources
- Staff support
- Training
- Grant writing



*“Through our ESP Bill of Rights campaign, more and more school employees are understanding and supporting the struggle for better contracts for every support staff in every county.”*

*— Ivory Smith, Chief Custodian, Maryland*

***Be sure to determine the best strategy to gain affiliate support. Then, submit a New Business Item or Resolution to your delegate assembly, and solidify support with influential leaders and/or governance bodies (e.g., committees and board of directors).***

# Step 3: Build a Leadership Team That Sparks Momentum

Every successful campaign needs a core team of committed, energized ESP leaders to guide the work. This group doesn't need to be huge, but it does need to be thoughtful, diverse, and united.

## Bring Together the Right People

Assemble and formalize a group/leadership team to shepherd the design, launch, and implementation of your campaign. This should be member-led with strong affiliate staff collaboration and support.



- Consider ESPs with a formal leadership role and active members who would be good additions to the team for leading organizing work. Consider their energy, enthusiasm, breadth of connections, availability, geographic diversity, ESP career family (involve as many career families as you can!), etc. Broad and intersectional diversity can harness the most creative and comprehensive view of needs and opportunities.
- Establish roles and responsibilities.
- Establish group agreements and expectations.
- Consider training for the campaign leadership team that equips them to lead confidently, including:
  - » Communication skills
  - » Strategic planning
  - » Organizing skills
  - » Story of self
  - » Managing group dynamics
  - » Data collection and assessment



*"Many of our ESPs work more than one job. I believe the work we do in our buildings should be enough to survive! We all deserve a living wage, career opportunities, and respect. I believe the ESP Bill of Rights will help do just that."*

*– Katrina Mills, Building Service Manager, Maryland*

## Define Roles and Agreements

From the start, set clear roles, responsibilities, and group agreements. Decide how you'll make decisions, communicate, and hold one another accountable.

*When ESPs take the lead, they set the tone for a movement that reflects their reality and their power.*

# Step 4: Know your Environment Inside and Out

Before you dive into campaigning, take a step back to understand the landscape you're working in. A clear picture of your union's internal strengths and the external political environment will help you set smart priorities and strategies.

Start by gathering a few key pieces of information about your union's current reality. This will become your baseline for growth and strategy.

## Assess the Internal Union Environment



Document the current union density throughout the affiliate. This can be done in collaboration with your state affiliate membership or organizing department. You'll want to know the following:

- Number of locals and/or sites and the percentage of members and potential members in each
- Membership density of teachers and other school employees compared to ESP membership density
- Number of members in each career family

Use this data as a baseline to measure future success and inform planning. For example, it can help you target campaign priorities whether it be by region, career family, locals with low or high density, or based on how contracts are bargained (i.e. wall-to-wall teachers and ESPs, all ESP career families together, or separate ESP career families).

## Assess the External Environment



Determining the external environment helps you see where your greatest opportunities and challenges lie. The external environment includes the political landscape, district, community and anyone outside your local who may be a decision maker or ally in this work. It also gives you a clear way to track progress over time as your campaign grows. Map out the following:

- Who are the decision makers? Do they support unions, public education, and educators, specifically ESPs?
- How strong is community support for public education and unions?
- How much influence do educators and the union have?
- What are the opportunities to elect pro-union, pro-public education officials?
- Have there been or are there potential issues around the privatization of ESP careers and vouchers?
- Where are opportunities to influence decision makers?

**Policy wins and organizing breakthroughs don't happen in a vacuum. Identifying the decision-makers, power players, and allies in your campaign will be pivotal to your success. This information will help you identify where to build alliances and where to apply pressure.**



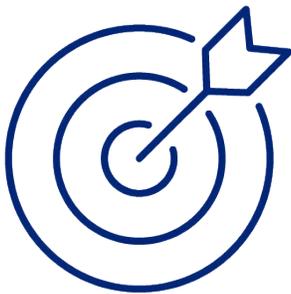
*"We want to build our strength at the bargaining table and that starts by building power in every county."*

*– Stacy Tayman, Human Resources Associate, Maryland*

***Power grows when we understand where we stand—and where we need to push.***

# Step 5: Set Bold, Clear Campaign Goals

Once you understand your landscape, it's time to **set your sights on what you want to achieve**. Strong goals give your campaign direction, inspire people to join, and keep everyone accountable along the way.

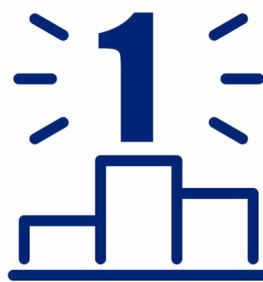


## Define Your Big Picture Aims

Think about what success looks like over the next few years, not just the next few months. What would winning look like in your state, district, or local?

Your goals might include:

- Growing and engaging ESP membership
- Increasing ESP visibility and inclusion
- Developing and elevating ESP leaders
- Winning new policies or legislation
- Securing bargaining and contract victories
- Shaping public perception of ESPs
- Influencing key decision makers and allies



## Prioritize for Impact

You can't win everything at once. And that's okay. Choose the goals that will have the biggest impact for the greatest number of ESPs and build momentum from there. Early wins build confidence and lay the groundwork for bigger fights.



## Build Your Budget

Be realistic about the resources you'll need. Create a campaign budget that supports your goals, whether that's training, outreach, materials, travel, or events. A well-planned budget keeps your work grounded and sustainable.

**Please note: you should do this iteratively throughout the process as you know more, review, and revise your plan and budget**



*"Many of our ESPs felt ashamed about their low wages. Through the Bill of Rights campaign we were able to place the shame where it belonged - on the school board."*

*— Saul Ramos, Paraeducator, Massachusetts*

**When we set ambitious goals, we invite others to dream and act with us.**

# Step 6: Identify Your Bill of Rights Priorities with Members Leading the Way

Your **Bill of Rights must reflect the voices, experiences, and priorities of ESP members.** When people see their concerns and ideas in the campaign, they're far more likely to engage, advocate, and lead.

## Start with Real Conversations

The best way to understand what matters most is to talk directly with ESPs. Create spaces for honest dialogue where people feel heard and valued. Conversations help build interest, foster trust, grow membership, and nurture long-term union engagement. Determine if you want to provide incentives for participation (e.g., stipends, mileage reimbursement, meals, recognition, and opportunities to attend union convenings).

Some great ways to gather input include:

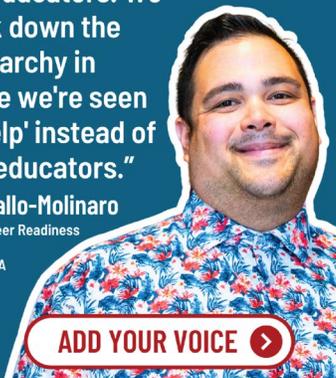
- One-on-one conversations
- 10-minute worksite meetings
- Listening sessions
- Surveys (e.g., online, paper, or social media)
- Opportunities at conferences and union events

### What do you think ESPs need most?

"ESPs need respect and recognition as essential educators. We need to break down the outdated hierarchy in schools where we're seen as just 'the help' instead of professional educators."

Mario Orallo-Molinari  
College & Career Readiness  
Coordinator  
Shoreline ESPA

ADD YOUR VOICE 



## Collect and Organize the Member Data

Determine what information you need to gather. Consider:

- Personal contact information (i.e. email and cell)
- Career family
- Worksite information
- District, college, or employer
- Years of service
- ESP issues and priorities
- Willingness to engage with campaign or serve in leadership role

Once you've gathered input, **analyze what you've learned.** Look for patterns, common issues, and unique priorities across regions, career families, or job titles.

Make sure everyone gathering information is trained and equipped with clear tools, so the data is consistent and useful.

Provide accommodations needed to reach and include all voices in the data collection. For example:

- Sign language interpreters
- Closed captioning
- Translation services
- Large script or braille questionnaires

## Design This Phase Thoughtfully

Budget for this step just as you would for any major organizing effort. Plan for multiple site visits, outreach events, and communication strategies. The stronger your outreach, the more representative and powerful your Bill of Rights will be.



*When every ESP has a chance to be heard, the Bill of Rights becomes a true reflection of our collective power.*

# Step 7: Turn Member Priorities into an ESP Bill of Rights

Once you've gathered input and identified key issues, it's time to **formalize your ESP Bill of Rights**. This is where member voices become a clear, powerful force for action.

## Analyze and Elevate the Top Issues

Review all the data you collected and determine which issues rise to the top. You may hear about many concerns but focus on the priorities that have broad support and the greatest potential impact.

Consider:

- Setting clear criteria for which issues to include (e.g., the percentage of members who identified it)
- Grouping related issues together under broader categories (e.g., “living wage,” “respect,” and “benefits”)
- Looking at patterns across demographics, regions, and career families
- Using charts or simple visuals to make the data easy to share with members and leader

*“You have to have two to three incomes in order to [survive] in the community that you live in, and that affects that bottom line in everything you do”*

*- Juan “Johnny” Ramos, School Custodian, Illinois*



## Keep It Simple and Powerful

Consider creating a **one-page** version of your Bill of Rights that outlines the core priorities clearly and boldly. Include:

- A short introduction that explains the purpose
- A brief explanation of each article or issue area
- Your logo, contact information, or a QR code to drive people to more resources

This document will become your **campaign's anchor**—the tool you'll use in conversations, presentations, bargaining, and advocacy.

## Secure Buy-In from Leaders and Members

Before finalizing your Bill of Rights, **share your findings with key groups**: affiliate leadership, executive boards, delegate assemblies, and ESP committees. This step ensures alignment and builds support for what comes next.

*An ESP Bill of Rights isn't just words on a page. It's a declaration of who ESPs are and what they deserve.*

# Step 8: Build a Toolkit That Amplifies Your Campaign

Once your Bill of Rights is finalized, it's time to get it into people's hands. A well-designed, easy-to-use toolkit gives local leaders, members, and allies the resources they need to **spread the word, build support, and act**.

## Create Branded, Accessible Materials

Your toolkit can be digital, printed, or both, but it should feel cohesive and easy to navigate. Consider including:

- A one-pager summarizing the core articles or priorities
- QR codes or direct links to campaign resources and your website
- Short articles or stories explaining the purpose and impact of the Bill of Rights
- Talking points that anyone can use to speak confidently about the campaign
- A meeting script or checklist for local leaders
- Board resolutions, sample bargaining language, and presentation slides
- Campaign videos, posters, and branded items (e.g., shirts, buttons, pens, and stickers)
- Translations of materials so every ESP can engage fully



## Keep It Member-Focused

Everything in the toolkit should help members and leaders start conversations, build momentum, and grow the movement. The more accessible and inspiring your materials are, the faster your campaign will spread.

*A great toolkit turns ideas into action and makes it easy for everyone to join in.*

# Step 9: Generate Buzz and Win Endorsements

With your ESP Bill of Rights and toolkit in hand, it's time to get people talking, build excitement, and secure public support. Awareness and endorsements help turn your campaign from an idea into a movement.



## Spread the Word

Start by activating your leadership team and early supporters. Ask them to share the Bill of Rights widely: in person, online, and at union events. Make sure every ESP that contributed their voice sees the final product and feels ownership of the campaign.

You can build awareness through:

- One-on-one conversations and small meetings
- Digital campaigns and social media posts
- Union newsletters, podcasts, or webinars
- Presentations at local and state gatherings

Include your one-pager, slides, and data visualizations to make the message clear and compelling.



## Secure Endorsements Strategically

Endorsements show that your campaign has real support and momentum. Identify leaders at each worksite or local to share the Bill of Rights with ESPs and secure endorsements.

Then, expand outward. Seek endorsements from both external and internal allies:



### External Allies:

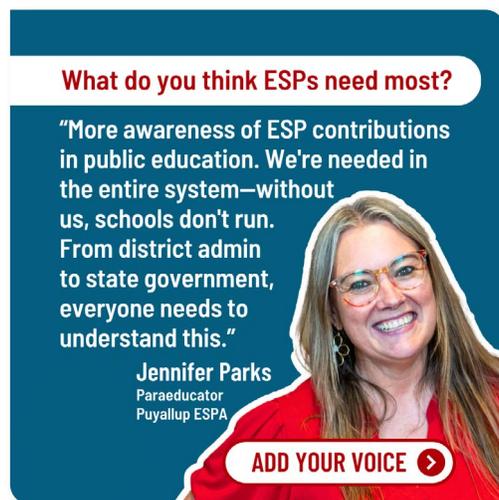
- Parent, caregiver, and student groups
- Community partners and allied organizations
- Other unions
- School boards
- Elected officials



### Internal Allies:

- Teachers and other school employees
- Administrators
- State boards or delegate assemblies

*Track your endorsements carefully; it's a powerful way to measure growth and build leverage for bargaining and legislative work.*



### What do you think ESPs need most?

"More awareness of ESP contributions in public education. We're needed in the entire system—without us, schools don't run. From district admin to state government, everyone needs to understand this."

Jennifer Parks  
Paraeducator  
Puyallup ESPA

ADD YOUR VOICE

*When people see broad support, they want to be part of the movement too.*

# Step 10: Take the Movement Further: Advance the Issues and Beyond

With your Bill of Rights endorsed and your campaign underway, the next step will be to **turn those priorities into real wins**. This is where strategy, organizing, and persistence come together to create lasting change.



*"I was working multiple jobs...16+ hours a day. It was really a struggle and i had to do it to make my ends meet. With our union contract, I was able to get those pay raises, which made it so I was able to fill in some of those gaps."*

*—Laken London, Senior Accounting Clerk, Michigan*

## Determine your strategy to advance the issues outlined in your Bill of Rights.

- Will your plan require legislation, policy change, or bargained language?
  - » Identify supportive decision makers.
- Train members on how to discuss their needs with elected officials.
- Determine plans to apply pressure to decision makers.
- Determine if the issues are statewide or local.
- Assess short-term and long-term wins and possibilities for success.
- Consider if the issues impact all ESPs or certain career families.

## Identify member organizers



- Conduct organizing training.
- Ensure diversity. Member organizers should reflect all ESPs in your state or local.
- Consider stipends for organizers.
- Determine the best times for organizers to reach potential members for maximum impact.
- Be sure to take into consideration various shifts and sometimes multiple jobs for ESPs.
- Consider engaging retired members to organize.
- Determine if you will engage in a summer organizing program.

## Build your union



- Target low density locals or worksites using the Bill of Rights as a tool to build relationships.
- Engage newly identified and potential leaders.
- Engage potential members who participated in sharing their concerns during the data collection phase.
- If your state participates in the NEA Year-Round Organizing (YRO) Program, consider how advancing the Bill of Rights aligns with that work.

# From the Field: Bill of Rights Organizing Successes

Since the ESP Bill of Rights movement began, 18 states have launched campaigns. Through their efforts, they're building power and changing the future of ESPs in their states—with ESP voices leading the way. By learning from other states and sharing their successes, you can motivate members and engage those you hope to bring into your coalition.

## Here are some wins ESP members have secured through organizing with the Bill of Rights.

### MARYLAND

 **Building Power:** ESP members led a summer organizing campaign that focused on conversations about the Bill of Rights, identifying new leaders, and signing up new members. As a result, they saw a 67% increase of ESPs in 2025 early membership enrollment compared to 2024.

 **Workplace Safety:** Partnered with other unions to drive legislation resulting in new state agency unit to oversee and enforce workplace safety for public employees. School systems are now required to create a workplace violence program and keep accurate records of workplace injuries. The agency unit will routinely and randomly inspect schools and buses prioritizing locations with the most complaints.

### MASSACHUSETTS

 **Path to a Living Wage:** Paraprofessionals in Somerville won a \$50,000 minimum salary through organizing with the Bill of Rights. Nearby districts are competing to attract paraprofessionals and raising pay to meet a similar standard.

 **Statewide Wages:** State legislators recently introduced legislation to increase paraprofessional pay to a minimum wage of \$55,000 a year.

### KANSAS

 **Organizing Tool:** In the last five years Kansas has grown their ESP membership by 148% through Bill of Rights-focused organizing.

 **Community and Connection:** ESPs sharing their stories and connecting with one another has led to not only an increase in membership but also a stronger union that's ready to advocate for ESPs.

### NATIONAL

 **Legislative Champions:** Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Chuy García (D-IL) introduced the Pay Paraprofessionals and Education Support Staff Act (S. 2451/H.R. 7032) to establish a national minimum wage for ESPs of \$45,000 a year or \$30 an hour. Sen. Markey and Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT) also introduced a resolution (S. Res. 158/H. Res. 297) in support of living wages, health care, paid leave and safe working conditions for ESPs.

*"I am the proud daughter of two public school bus drivers. I know firsthand what it's like when a family has to struggle to make ends meet because the job they love doesn't pay them a living wage. That is why I am thrilled to stand in support of Senator Markey's resolution for a Paraprofessional and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights." - Princess Moss, NEA Vice President*



# JOIN the MOVEMENT

THIS IS OUR MOMENT

Just like the Bill of Rights is more than words on paper, the campaign to get one is more than just a set of steps. It's a commitment across the community **to fundamentally change how our schools and communities value the people who dedicate their lives to making sure our schools can function each day.**

It's led by ESPs, supported by allies across our communities, and fueled by our shared belief: **every school employee deserves respect, fair pay, good benefits, safe workplaces, and a real voice.**

*I too often see that ESPs in my community are not honored and respected enough. We deserve to feel loved and supported in our communities. The ESP Bill of Rights will highlight what ESPs need to be able to do their work and be treated as professionals."*

*- Ric Calhoun, Campus Supervisor, Washington*



The path isn't always quick or easy, but don't be discouraged. It takes time, organizing, creativity, and perseverance. It takes you. Every conversation, every endorsement, and every local campaign adds up. Together, we're building something bigger than any one of us: a movement that will **shape the future for ESPs and the students and communities we serve.**

You don't have to do this alone. NEA staff and fellow ESP leaders are here to support you every step of the way.

👉 Learn more at [nea.org/espbillofrights](https://nea.org/espbillofrights)

✉ Questions or looking for sample tools and resources?  
Reach us at [ESPBOR@nea.org](mailto:ESPBOR@nea.org)

🎯 **Remember:** *When ESPs lead boldly, changes happen. When you organize, your stories, your challenges, and your dreams become demands. And that's how power shifts. The ESP Bill of Rights is both a roadmap and a rallying cry. When we come together, listen to one another, and organize around our shared vision, we can win the respect and conditions every ESP deserves.*

**Let's build this movement—together.**



NEA ESP Bill of Rights Toolkit