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June 18, 2019

Dear Delegates:

As we prepare to embark upon NEA's Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly in Houston, I wanted to alert you to an issue that you should be aware of when you reach your hotel. When you check in, or as you are settling into your room, you may be asked to "Make a Green Choice" or "Save a Little Green." In essence, your hotel is asking you to forego housekeeping services in order to help the environment. In exchange for doing so, you may be offered loyalty points or even a gift card to one of your favorite coffee shops.

While it is admirable that some hotels are considering the environment as part of their general operations, it is important to understand that hotels use these programs as cost-saving measures intended to reduce the cost of labor associated with cleaning services. When you refuse housekeeping services, the wages, and thus the livelihood, of housekeepers is adversely affected. Housekeepers not only clean rooms, they also tend to laundry, restock room supplies, and perform other tasks. Most housekeepers are paid hourly and depend on wages and tips to support themselves and their families. The reduced demand for their services means that housekeepers work fewer hours and, as a result, get paid less.

NEA supports our sisters and brothers in the labor movement who work as housekeepers at hotels throughout the country. While you are in Houston, we are asking you to forego the "Green Choice" option at your hotel. In addition, UniteHere! is asking us to join the effort to support housekeepers by signing a pledge that encourages individuals not to choose the "Green Choice" option. If you are so inclined, you can sign the pledge at <https://www.marriotttravelalert.org>.

You can also use some or all of the following ten tips to reduce your impact on the environment while in Houston:

1. Bring your own bottle: water bottles and coffee thermoses can be refilled and reduce waste;
2. Use natural light when possible;
3. Conserve water when showering;
4. Use drapes and curtains to control the temperature in your room;
5. Switch off electricity to avoid waste;
6. Take advantage of recycling bins in your room;
7. Repurpose and reuse bags, silverware, and other items;
8. Say no to plastic! Plastic bags, straws, bottles, and containers are harmful to the environment;
9. Use public transit and/or carpool when you head out to explore Houston; and

10. Be a green delegate! During registration on July 3 any interested delegate not already designated as “green” may check in with NEA staff to change status. You can view and/or download the contents you need to your personal device before arriving in Houston.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lily Eskelsen García". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lily Eskelsen García  
President, National Education Association