

Mar. 22, 2023

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Members of the Labor committee:

Education Minnesota is the professional voice of 86,000 professional educators. We're grateful for the inclusion of the Union Freedoms bill language in the A1 amendment to the Labor omnibus bill (HF1522), and we ask that you support the proposal in committee today.

This legislation includes changes to the Public Employees Labor Relations Act (PELRA) that will help public unions represent members and organize more effectively. Workers in Minnesota are fighting an uphill battle to be heard in their workplaces after decades of anti-union legislation at both the state and federal levels.

This proposal makes these important changes:

- This bill makes sure educators can talk about real working condition issues at the bargaining table – class sizes, how many paras are in our classroom, mental health supports. Educators spend the most time with students and should be able to advocate for their needs.
- The proposal ensures that relevant contact information and grievance data is shared with the union. Unions have a responsibility to represent everyone in the bargaining unit, not just the ones who choose to join the union. The union cannot advocate for all educators without establishing communication with those educators. Management has a conflict of interest in determining what information to share. Unnecessary gatekeeping shouldn't be a barrier to workers knowing their rights.
- The bill gives more workers the option of joining the union. Adding part-time, seasonal school staff, Tier I teachers, prekindergarten and early learning instructors to the definition of "teacher" to allow for union membership enhances the education workforce. These are some of the lowest-paid, least-supported workers in our schools, and face the greatest rate of turnover, which ultimately has a negative effect on students. They deserve the ability to unionize.

Public schools are better when districts and educators work collaboratively for the good of the students. It's incredibly important, now more than ever, that educators' opinions are taken into account when making school decisions.

Democratic unions are the backbone of our state. This bill makes incremental changes in a union's ability to share power with employers. Our 86,000 members across the state are eagerly waiting for these changes.

We're grateful for your thorough consideration. Please support HF1522 in committee today.

Together,



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Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers,
the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**