

May 6, 2022

Re: Public Employment Relations Board

Dear members of the House & Senate Jobs, Energy, and Commerce Conference Committee,

We, the coalition of public employees below, are writing to urge you to adopt the House position that restores the Public Employment Relations Board's (PERB) jurisdiction and provides the investments needed to allow the board to perform its job functions as outlined by the Legislature.

The PERB was created by the Legislature in 2014 to investigate and rule on unfair labor practices (ULPs). After an extended delay, the board began its work in 2020 with inadequate base funding. After a year of deciding claims, legislative decisions led to the board's pause in 2021.

In absence of the PERB, the only avenue for ULPs is through costly lawsuits in already overburdened district courts. The PERB is a benefit to both public employers and employees. It protects both parties from what could be a long and costly court process. This is an efficient process that is similar to what already exists in the private sector.

Even with the funding outlined in the House position, the PERB would still be one of the lowest funded state agencies in Minnesota. This funding would allow the board to hire investigators, attorneys, and other necessary staff to fulfill its charge.

In addition to this necessary funding request, the PERB is also proposing legislative amendments to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and the Open Meeting Law. The language will provide clear guidance to entities and individuals filing or defending ULP charges. It also clarifies that public employers can share private personnel data with the PERB during the investigation of a ULP charge. Lastly, it exempts the PERB from the Open Meeting law under specific circumstances, like deliberation of cases.

The PERB proved beneficial in its rollout, however, it must be properly funded to continue its work. We again urge you to include this critical provision in your final compromise. Thank you.

Sincerely,

AFSCME Council 5	Minnesota Association	Saint Paul Regional Labor
AFSCME Council 65	of Professional Employees	Federation, AFL-CIO
East Central Area Labor	Minnesota Nurses Association	SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa
Council, AFL-CIO	Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters	SEIU Minnesota State Council
Education Minnesota	Minnesota State College Faculty	Southeast Minnesota Area Labor
Inter Faculty Organization	Minnesota State Retiree	Council, AFL-CIO
Law Enforcement Labor Services	Council, AFL-CIO	Teamsters Local 320
Minnesota AFL-CIO	Northeast Area Labor	West Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO
	Council, AFL-CIO	