



April 4, 2024

Chair Dziedzic and committee members:

As the state labor federation representing over 300,000 members of over 1,000 local unions, we are writing in support of the proposed changes to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) in SF 4597.

Workers at the University of Minnesota wish to organize unions in order to bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and working conditions. We are deeply concerned about the barriers that PELRA currently poses to the ability of U of M employees to exercise these fundamental labor rights.

At present, PELRA's outdated provisions effectively prevent approximately 23,000 workers at the University of Minnesota from freely choosing whether to join a union. While some of the statutory units established for the U of M represent clear communities of interest and should be maintained, others lack any common sense definition. These units force hundreds of disparate groups together while also needlessly dividing workers performing similar duties. In effect, they make unionization virtually impossible.

Moreover, many U of M workers, particularly those who rely on financial aid, are paid through stipends, or are subject to undercounted hours, are unfairly excluded from exercising their collective bargaining rights under the current PELRA framework. This bill seeks to rectify these injustices and ensure that all U of M employees have equal opportunities to organize and bargain collectively.

This bill is about restoring common sense to the labor landscape at the U of M and bringing this portion of PELRA in line with widely accepted labor practices. We urge you to stand with us in supporting this bill and ensuring that the rights of U of M workers are upheld and protected.

Best regards,

Melissa Hysing
Legislative Director





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