

## University Education Association of UMD

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Dear Chair Fateh and Members of the Minnesota Senate Higher Education Committee,

I write to convey the University Education Association-Duluth's support for SF 4597, which modifies the definition of public employees and, in addition, modifies bargaining unit determinations in the University of Minnesota System as they appear in the Minnesota Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA).

I am the President of one of two chapters of the University Education Association, a union that has represented faculty in the University of Minnesota System since 1983. During my career at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, I have witnessed first-hand the power of my union to advocate for fair pay and good working conditions for faculty at UMD. By looking out for faculty, our union has made sure that students in Duluth and Crookston can obtain an excellent University of Minnesota education. Our union has consistently stood for a strong faculty voice in the management of the University, as well as for dignity in our academic workplace.

It is time for our colleagues on the Twin Cities campus and elsewhere in the University of Minnesota System to have the same right to collective bargaining, if they so choose, and to remove the barriers resulting from the manipulation of bargaining units by anti-union university administrators. The UEA-Duluth supports this legislation because we want bargaining unit determinations to be consistent with the type of work performed by our instructional colleagues, as opposed to the "catch-all" bargaining units that are currently in place and that actively prevent the organization of unions for the University's instructors at all levels.

PELRA, as it currently exists, has created a welcome space within which the UEA has been able to advocate for U of MN Faculty, and it is time to expand those protections through a timely update to the statute.

Sincerely,



John D. Schwetman  
President  
University Education Association-Duluth