

Denise Specht
President

Monica Byron
Vice President

Rodney Rowe
Secretary-Treasurer

Carrie Lucking
Executive Director

April 8, 2024

Re: PELRA amendments

Dear Chair McEwen and members of the Senate Labor Committee,

On behalf of Education Minnesota, I am writing to urge your strong support for the proposed amendments to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) in Minnesota. We are deeply concerned about the barriers that PELRA currently poses to the ability of University of Minnesota employees to exercise their fundamental labor rights. As such, we urge passage of this bill during this legislative session.

At present, PELRA's outdated provisions effectively prevent approximately 23,000 U of M workers from freely choosing whether to join a union.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.

Together,



Denise Specht, President
Education Minnesota

41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103
651-227-9541 800-652-9073 Fax 651-292-4802
www.educationminnesota.org

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



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