

WHY DOES THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA NEED PELRA REFORM?

PELRA is supposed to guarantee the right to collective bargaining for Minnesota's public employees. However, as currently written, PELRA prevents over 23,000 faculty, staff, and student workers at the University of Minnesota from forming common sense unions. These workers simply want the same opportunities and protections as any other group of public employees in our state.

To restore the right to unionize across the U of M, the legislature must pass SF 4597/HF 4508 and:

1. *Eliminate statutorily-mandated bargaining units that prevent unionization and are out of step with the U of M workforce.*
2. *Clearly state that U of M workers know best who belongs in their unions.*
3. *Restore the collective bargaining rights of workers who receive financial aid, participate in work-study programs, work part-time, or are paid through stipends or waivers.*



Why do we need to eliminate the unorganized U of M bargaining units in PELRA?

Thousands of U of M employees are trapped in 'catch-all' bargaining units that make unionization effectively impossible. For decades, these units have been packed with new hires who share little in common, and organized employees have been reclassified out of their unions and into these 'catch-alls.' This has resulted in a massive concentration of workers into non-union jobs. Although only 4 of 13 mandated units are non-union, these 4 now hold about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the U of M workforce.

These units are deeply flawed. They consist of hundreds of dissimilar positions spread across the state. Employees who *do* perform similar jobs often find themselves divided between two or more units. For example, a Twin Cities lecturer shares a mandated bargaining unit with thousands of HR, IT, and administrative staffers across the five campuses—including the Director of Athletics. Yet, the same lecturer is barred from unionizing with the adjunct professor one classroom over.

U of M workers deserve the same rights as other public sector employees, not mandated units that undermine their interests. These units radically depart from the standards of public and private sector labor law. The legislature must remove them and restore common sense labor relations on campus.

Why do certain campus workers need a place in PELRA?

Many U of M workers cannot join unions due to their conditions of employment, compensation, and calculation of hours.

- Instructors' hours are systematically undercounted. Those teaching one course are recorded as working just 13.5 hours per week--30 minutes short of the PELRA minimum for collective bargaining--even though most instructors devote far more time to their students.
- PELRA already recognizes *some* student workers as public employees. However, these rights are denied to student workers who need financial aid or work-study programs to pay for college.
- Graduate workers who win fellowships lose their status as public employees and the protections of collective bargaining, even when they see no change in their jobs.
- Postdoctoral fellows provide cutting edge research but may not be classified as public employees.
- Professional students who provide highly technical services on campus may lose their status as public employees due to the allocation of their hours.

These groups perform essential services and advance the university's mission of education, research, and outreach. However, according to PELRA, they are not public employees. The legislature must close these loopholes that needlessly deny collective bargaining rights to thousands of workers.