

March 17, 2024

Minnesota Senate
1200 Minnesota Senate Building
State and Local Government and Veterans Committee
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Dziedzic and the State and Local Government and Veterans Committee,

I am writing today as an Information Technology administrator currently employed by the University of Minnesota (UMN) to express my support for SF4597, which if passed would reform the MN Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA).

I have worked in Information Technology roles for UMN, in both Civil Service and P&A classified positions, since late 2016 and I feel I can speak to how these overly broad and heterogeneous bargaining units harm our (IT workers) ability to provide the best possible service to the University and its various important missions. Rather than providing the Information Technology community at the University with the ability to collectively organize around workplace issues relevant to our positions, the current paradigm splits the IT@UMN community into separate, enormous bargaining units that make it very difficult to champion said IT-specific workplace issues as they are not relevant to most other employees within these units. This dynamic, in effect, denies Information Technology workers at the University the same collective bargaining rights enjoyed by public employees elsewhere in the state of Minnesota.

The various IT teams and the staff of whom they are composed play an extremely critical role here at the University. As the University of Minnesota continues its many decades long practice of being at the forefront of advances in computer and information systems technology, and as we push ever further into a digital world, the ability for IT workers to come together with a focus on our workplace is of significant importance. Empowering the people who make up our professional community to collectively determine what makes the most sense for our workplace will aid us in continuing to protect, maintain and grow the digital ecosystem that has become core to the University's service and operations on every level. Ultimately, the ability to come together to focus on the IT workplace will lead to stronger IT service across the University and benefit everyone; students, faculty, staff and the public, in our community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Miles de Klerk
Endpoint Engineer, UMN College of Design IT Team