

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
One strong united voice for Minnesota workers

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Wednesday March 19, 2025

Co Chairs Youakim and Kresha, and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

AFSCME Council 5 represents 43,000 public and private sector workers across the State of Minnesota, including several bargaining units in K12 public schools. Our members work alongside students every day, making meaningful impacts on the lives of students and facilitating the work our educators do, both in the classroom and behind the scenes. We are writing today in support of HF 2210, and urge its passage through the committee.

This law, enacted in 2023, fixed an historic inequity that unfairly excluded hourly school workers from receiving unemployment benefits, regardless of whether or not the school district had adequate work for them over the summer. This problem grievously harmed our members during the Covid-19 pandemic, when no one had a reasonable assurance that they were coming back to in-person work in the fall of 2020, and the usual second (or third) jobs weren't available either. That summer, our members went to great lengths to avoid poverty, taking out second mortgages on their homes, selling family heirlooms, and doing anything to get by. That harm will never be rectified, but now that our members have access to unemployment insurance if they need it, we have the security we need to make it through the eight weeks of summer we don't have any work

HF 2210 would protect the financial integrity for another couple of summers, which keeps the costs off of the property taxpayers. Although this bill will eventually shift this appropriation into the districts levy authority, our hope is that through exploring avenues for increasing revenues for this biennium and the next, we can continue to fund this lifeline for our members with state dollars.

We respectfully request your passage of HF 2210.

Thank you.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan Vogel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ethan Vogel
Legislative Director
AFSCME Council 5