



March 8, 2024

Representative Kaela Berg
577 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Zaynab Mohamed
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2103
St. Paul, MN 55155



Representative Berg and Senator Mohamed,

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a private, nonprofit organization currently in its 124th year of operations. All 331 school boards across Minnesota voluntarily join MSBA for the vast number of services they provide to school boards and school districts. MSBA represents 2,194 school board members who in turn are responsible for the success of 793,851 students. These board members are locally elected officials and are responsible for the governance of their public schools.

In partnership with the Minnesota School Business Officials (MASBO), as your bills are heard in the respective body, we respectfully request the committee to consider the following concerns we have with HF 3446/SF 3588.

- For student success, schools must be open, and students are in the classrooms learning.
- Labor disputes impact everyone involved. Our communities suffer and division is a consequence. The greatest impact is on our students. Our organization wants to minimize the impact on our students and maximize their success.
- Under this bill, school districts must pay unemployment benefits for school staff who are active participants in the labor dispute. This could include the entire staff. In 2023, the legislature funded unemployment benefits for hourly school district employees. All other unemployment costs, including those created in this bill, will ultimately be recovered from school district taxpayers via the unemployment levy authorized in [Sec. 126C.43 MN Statutes](#).
- Our goal is to have a balanced approach to the collective bargaining process with compromise as an essential element of negotiations. This bill reduces the incentive to reach an agreement as it subsidizes employees to prolong a labor dispute. These disputes will also significantly impact other employee bargaining units, i.e., bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and paraprofessionals.
- This bill will increase school district costs during a labor dispute by requiring payment for unemployment costs and wages to replacement workers.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Respectfully,

Minnesota School Boards Association

Minnesota Association of School Business Officials