

LOCAL 284



**SERVICE
EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL
UNION**

Imagine...

Students in every Minnesota school having all that they need to succeed, from pre-k to career;

A community that recognizes our contribution to education by providing good working conditions and fair wages to all staff;

An economy that fairly rewards everyone's hard work and enables all families to enjoy a good quality of life through their work and retirement years;

A Union of members powerful enough to make it happen!

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March 5, 2019

Representative Christensen
577 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Re: Snow Days (HF 1982)

Rep. Christensen:

SEIU Local 284 represents more than 9 thousand education workers across Minnesota. Workers include professors, clerical staff, paraeducators, nutritional services workers, building and grounds workers, early learning staff, custodians, and bus drivers. Our mission is to improve the lives of working people and their families and lead the way to a more just and humane society. As part of that mission SEIU Local 284 strongly supports the goal of this bill: adding flexibility for districts after this historic winter.

SEIU Local 284 members work hard every day to make sure our schools are places where our students can learn and reach their full potential. Whether it is driving kids to school, feeding lunch, helping in classrooms or fixing a leaky ceiling, our work is the foundation of making our public schools function. Unlike salaried teachers, SEIU Local 284 members are paid hourly for our work. If this move to cancel out the days missed doesn't include pay for our work, we simply lose out. There are already shortages in bus drivers and other positions because people can get better pay and benefits doing something else. It is our hope that our elected officials will make clear how much they value our contribution to the schools by clearly including school staff compensation in the bill.

We support the amendment, which ensures that school staff like bus drivers, pre-K teachers, paras, food service workers, and custodians get paid for these missed days, instead of leaving it up to each district. Based on our past experience many districts will choose to do the right thing and compensate their employees but many won't. Every school staff member should be compensated for missed hours because of extreme weather, which will save hardworking Minnesotans across our state from significant stress and hardship.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gibbons
Executive Director
SEIU Local 284