

January 29, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Sarah Lerud. I am the librarian at the Valley City Jr. Sr. High School that serves students in grades 7 – 12. I am currently the Valley City Education Association President and have been a negotiator for VCEA for nearly all of my sixteen years working at VCHS. I am against SB 2215 because of the deadline for negotiations that it is trying to impose.

In all my years as a negotiator, we have never concluded negotiations before June 1st which this bill is trying to limit. Districts do not know how much money they will be receiving from the state especially in a new biennium until May. That would give the negotiations process less than a month to be completed. Teachers are still working full time during May, and it can be difficult to set up appropriate meeting times for all stake holders in negotiations during the school year.

For many years, our district did not even start negotiations until after school was out. It is unfair to ask our teachers and negotiators to complete their contract negotiations in such a short timeframe. The timeframe of negotiations should be left to local control and not decided at the state level. Each district and education association can determine what is best for their negotiations process.

Thank you,

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