

Chairman Schaible and Senate Education committee,

My name is Danielle Giesler, I am currently in my 8th year as a School Counselor at Jamestown Middle School. I also serve as president of our local education association and have also been a part of our negotiating teams. I am currently on maternity leave, but felt compelled to address SB2215 with you.

I am writing to urge you to oppose this bill. This bill is an attempt to limit the abilities of local teachers to negotiate fair contracts. If passed, this would take away local control of the timing of negotiations from School Boards and local bargaining units, where it belongs. This could drastically impact working conditions for all North Dakota teachers at a time when teachers are already struggling.

Data consistently shows that although North Dakota graduates enough teachers from our colleges, our schools across the state are struggling with recruiting and retention of these teachers. In fact, only 50% of current teachers that are employed plan to retire as a teacher. The teaching profession is experiencing a crisis of stress that is leading to burn out.

One way that we know that helps deal with burn out is to feel heard on the conditions in our workplace. By limiting the length of time of negotiations, it also limits the amount of time where meaningful conversations can be had to work through the needs of teachers and improve working conditions for teachers and learning environments for our kids.

A fair contract has a direct impact on their work life, which helps with retaining experienced teachers, which directly impacts their students. North Dakota students deserve to have experienced teachers in their classrooms, the more stress and burn out, the more teachers are leaving their professions. The best contracts come through real dialogue with a timeline set at the local level not at the state.

I urge a Do Not Pass on SB2215.

Sincerely,

Danielle Giesler

Jamestown, ND