



CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

Date: September 7, 2023

To: All Legislators

From: State Representatives Marisabel Cabrera and Christine Sinicki
Senator Chris Larson

Re: Co-sponsorship of LRB-4276/LRB-4267, relating to: bargaining over wages, hours, and conditions of employment for public employees

Deadline: **Friday, September 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

We are introducing the Workers First package to ensure every worker has access to fair wages, good benefits, workplace protections, and a high quality of life. For too long, the Legislature has ignored the needs of working people, from rolling back workers' rights to undermining local control and diminishing the economic well-being of the men and women who work hard for a living. As our state continues to experience a worker shortage, it is past time to put Wisconsin workers first.

COVID-19 changed the way people think about frontline workers as the pandemic highlighted how much we all rely on public employees to make our communities work. People understand and agree that our state laws must support the same workers that support us. We need to keep pulling together to grow our economic wellbeing and build even stronger communities.

Collective bargaining rights ensure those that are doing the work have a voice. Unfortunately, in Wisconsin, most public employees do not have collective bargaining rights. Public employees who risked their lives for all us during the coronavirus pandemic deserve the freedom to collaborate with their employers and negotiate things like salaries, benefits, hours, and working conditions.

All workers should have the freedom to use their voice on the job to protect their interests and safely provide for their families. LRB-4276/LRB-4267 aims to enable public employees to do just that.

If you would like to be added as a co-sponsor, please reply to this email or call Rep. Cabrera's office at 608-266-1707 by Friday, September 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Note that unless otherwise requested, legislators will be added to both the Assembly and Senate versions of the bill.

ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

Under current law, the only subject that most state and municipal employees may collectively bargain is a percentage increase in base wages that does not exceed the percentage increase in the consumer price index. This bill removes that limitation so that state and municipal employees may bargain over any increase in wages.

Also, under current law, certain protective occupation participants under the Wisconsin Retirement System, known as public safety employees, and certain municipal transit employees may collectively bargain wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Under the bill, most state and general municipal employees may collectively bargain hours and conditions of employment.

The bill also allows all municipal employers and labor organizations to agree to a dispute settlement procedure, including binding interest arbitration, to resolve an impasse over the terms of a collective bargaining agreement under the Municipal Employment Relations Act.

Under current law, representatives for most municipal and state employee bargaining units must be selected by at least 51 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit. The bill changes that requirement to a simple majority of the employees voting in the collective bargaining unit.

Finally, under current law, representatives for most municipal and state employee bargaining units must be certified annually by receiving at least 51 percent of the vote of the employees in the bargaining unit. The bill repeals this certification requirement.