

Sen. Larson and Rep. Shankland: Introduce the “Collective Bargaining for Public Education” Act

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MADISON – Today, Democratic legislators stood with members of the education sector workforce to introduce the Collective Bargaining for Public Education Act.

Lead authors, Senator Chris Larson and Representative Katrina Shankland issued the following statement:

“Wisconsin has been experiencing a major teacher and worker shortage. Year after year, teacher and support staff deficits from K-12 to the UW System level have left many of our education professionals overworked and under-resourced. These issues are compounded as these frontline student advocates do not have a voice in their workplace.

“Wisconsin’s public education sector has a unique and critical role to play in our state. From sparking inspiration and fostering a passion for learning in young minds to securing Wisconsin’s economic future, our public institutions are the bedrock of social and economic development in our state. To ensure the effectiveness of these institutions, we rely on highly qualified individuals and their talents to move our state forward.

“Unfortunately, over the past decade, our education sector has been besieged by persistent worker shortages, insufficient state resources, insecure financial futures, and stifled voices in the workplace. These issues are a result of the continued decline in state support and political rhetoric and legislation eroding the rights of public employees.

“Thankfully, our neighbors have stood firm with our public education sector workers, as a recent Wisconsin poll indicated that 76% of our neighbors support their right to collectively bargain. The legislation we have introduced establishes the right of employees of school districts, CESAs, technical college districts, and the UW System to collectively bargain over wages, hours, and conditions of employment.”

Senator Larson stated, “Clearly our neighbors understand the importance of our public education workers as well as their right to have a meaningful voice in the workplace. As a Legislature, we must acknowledge and empower their right to collectively bargain.”

“Whether they are working at the head of the classroom or behind the scenes, all staff in non-managerial and non-supervisory roles should be afforded their right to collectively bargain over wages, hours, and conditions of employment.”

Representative Shankland concluded: “Our educators and staff are fundamental to the success and well-being of our families and communities, and they deserve to have a voice in the workplace, including the ability to organize and advocate for their students and themselves.”