

1-18-18

To: House Education Committee

From: AFSCME Council 93 Vermont – Staff Representative Joshua Massey

The disadvantages of moving from an individual healthcare bargaining system to a statewide bargaining system for education workers

On behalf of AFSCME Council 93 Vermont represented custodians, bus drivers, bus aides, and cafeteria workers we would like to highlight the disadvantages of changing a bargaining system that functions well enough to provide moderately affordable healthcare.

My colleague, Staff Representative David Van Deusen, has set in committee and spent months with our workers to determine their position on moving to a statewide bargaining system and they are currently adamantly opposed to such change.

Currently the workers bargain locally with their school boards, which have the best intentions to provide quality education to the students who will be the future of Vermont and local communities. The school boards are the experts for their regions and know what benefits motivate their workers to reach peak performance for the youth of Vermont.

Currently AFSCME Council 93 represented workers have an 80/20 split with a \$400 dollar individual deductible and a \$1200 deductible which would equal the price of a car payment or a used car all at once for our low income workers and families.

Right now our workers are happy with bargaining locally and do not believe property taxes going down \$30 on a \$200,000 home and moving to a statewide bargaining system will result in anything but an increased healthcare cost they are already struggling to afford and in addition, the current status of their healthcare is sometimes they only motivating reason workers and families choose to serve Vermont students.

Healthcare is a broken system in the USA and we desperately need to fix that system for everyday workers and families.

AFSCME Council 93 would support moving to a Single Payer universal healthcare system that would address the larger healthcare crisis for the state and ultimately the nation, but would ask legislators to leave well enough alone and not fix what is not broken by allowing our workers to continue to bargain locally with local experts for healthcare for individuals and families. Our workers will be watching attentively and voting according to actions taken on their preferred bargaining method for healthcare.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration to the testimony on behalf of AFSCME Council 93.