

To: Chair Stevens, House Committee on General, Housing & Military Affairs

Cc: Ron Wild, Committee Assistant

From: Patricia K. Turley, Esq., General Counsel

Date: September 16, 2020

Re: S. 254 – Proposed Changes to State Employees Labor Relations Act

I am writing on behalf of the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) to provide comment on S.254. The VSCS employs over 2,500 regular full-time and part-time employees between its four separate institutions and offices. The VSCS currently has employees in six different bargaining units: full-time faculty, part-time faculty, professional-administrative-technical employees, supervisory employees, non-faculty employees, and CCV faculty. A petition for a seventh unit (online part-time faculty) is currently pending at the VLRB.

We agree with the concerns voiced by the VSBA regarding this bill. As a system, we would be unable to respond fully and accurately within the short timeframes (2 days, 4 days, 8 days) contemplated by the bill. The Senate added a section to the bill which allows for an extension of these deadlines by the Board due to “unforeseen circumstances,” yet the short timeframes are the presumed norm. They are not realistic even under typical circumstances. As an example, we received a petition for a new bargaining unit a few weeks ago. Because the information necessary to respond was stored in different systems and required coordination among several individuals, we needed the full number of days currently provided for in the statute to meet the deadlines. Without adequate time, the list of employees would have been imprecise and our response on the proposed unit determination would have been ill-defined, either of which could be confusing or disruptive to the certification process.

In summary, we remain concerned with the very short timeframes for an employer’s accurate and responsive filings to petitions. Thank you for the opportunity to share these concerns on behalf of the VSCS.