

Dear Senator Hashim and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of S.151.

Last year, I served on the board of a small preschool. In April, the lead teacher & director made the decision to terminate the upcoming school year. There were many upset parents and community members. The director mentioned that we, the board, could be liable for any monies owed to the teachers & organization.

This was news to me at the time and was incredibly alarming. The possibility that I could be responsible for the school's unpaid debts (which were all the worse without the income from future families) was stressful and confusing.

I joined this particular board because my children attended the school and the board was looking for new members. I loved the school and wanted to give back. All the volunteers were parents who also loved and believed in the school. We didn't have a wealth of experience as board members. For volunteers who only want to support the school their children attended, to suddenly be put in the position of possibly paying thousands of dollars of outstanding fees, bills and services was very frightening.

I would absolutely say that this experience changed the way I approach volunteer work. I still want to give back to my community, but I have decided to be much more thoughtful about where and how I volunteer my time. Joining a board naively 'just because I want to help' no longer completely rings true. I need to know that the organization is sound, has strong leadership and has systems in place to protect board members. This experience yielded a hard-learned lesson but one that I will carry with me going forward. Providing support to current and future volunteers so they are more comfortable serving would be a huge help.

S.151 would help protect volunteers acting in good faith and reduce the chilling effect that litigation risk has on community service. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Heather Durkel