

UNITED FACULTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bill Introduced by Legislature Seeks to Penalize Public Employees for Their Employer's Mistake *Proposal Adds Absurd Standards in Attempt to Erase Iowa's Public Unions*

(CEDAR FALLS, Iowa) –[Iowa Senate Study Bill 3185](#), introduced this week by State Sen. Adrian Dickey (R-Packwood) would penalize and decertify public unions in Iowa for their employer's mistake in failing to submit a list of employees to the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

“There is no other way to define this bill except as an attack on Iowa's public employees and their right to have public unions,” said Christopher Martin, a communication and media professor and president of United Faculty, the union representing about 500 faculty members at the University of Northern Iowa.

The new language in the bill states that if the public employer fails to submit a list of employees to the PERB within 10 days, the board shall issue written notice of the failure to the public employer and the bargaining representative. Five days after issuance of such notice, the board shall immediately decertify the representative and the public employees shall not be represented by an employee organization.

Under the proposed legislation, if by oversight or by malicious intent, the public employer (e.g., Iowa's Board of Regents, or a public school district) fails to submit a list of employees in the bargaining unit, it is the public employee labor union that pays the price. The only way to prevent immediate decertification is for the public employee union to go to district court within five days to petition for extending the deadline – the deadline that the *employer* missed, not the public employee union.

“We always want to do our best as public employees at the University of Northern Iowa and serve our students and the statewide community,” Martin said. “But, this bill seeks to undermine our working conditions. It hurts even more that an alumnus of our great university would sponsor legislation that seeks to harm our faculty, and all public employees across the state.”

Faculty at UNI have successfully supported recertification in 2020 and 2022 with at least 97% approval in those elections. “We have proved we have overwhelming support for our public employee union, and worker support for their public employee unions across the entire state is similar,” Martin said.

The purpose of [Chapter 20](#), the state code that provides for public employee collective bargaining, is “to promote harmonious and cooperative relationships between government and its employees by permitting public employees to organize and bargain collectively; to protect the citizens of this state by assuring effective and orderly operations of government in providing for their health, safety, and welfare.”

Chapter 20 was enacted in 1974 with bipartisan support, and signed by Republican Gov. Robert Ray. The law led to collaborative contracts and labor peace at Iowa's schools, universities, and other public workplaces for more than 40 years.

MORE-MORE-MORE

In 2017, the legislature and governor pushed through a bill that eviscerated Chapter 20. The changes excluded nearly all topics that were subject to collective bargaining, and severely constrained wage increases. It also added red tape to the process by requiring union recertification elections every two years.

SSB 3185 adds further and wholly unreasonable restrictions to Chapter 20 and public employees' fifty-year right in Iowa to organize.

United Faculty, established in 1976, is the chief negotiating agent for the University of Northern Iowa's faculty, and is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors/American Federation of Teachers (AAUP/AFT).

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