

# HB2778

## COVID SCHOOL EMPLOYEE BENEFIT & WAGE PROTECTION BILL



- 1 There is a growing teacher and support staff shortage in our state and we should be doing everything we can to keep experienced educators in our schools and to encourage others to join the education profession.
- 2 Currently, our educators and school employees are exhausting their sick time when they have to quarantine because of COVID-19. Many students are too young to be vaccinated, which makes quarantining even more important for our students' safety.
- 3 Providing COVID administrative relief days will preserve school employees' earned leave time while also allowing for quarantining and other COVID related absences.
- 4 Our school districts already have the money to fund these days. Districts could use Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSR) fund money.
- 5 Our educators are doing what's best for students by conducting learning in person. They should not have to use their leave time, or worse, take unpaid leave to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- 6 We believe all hourly employees should continue to get a paycheck in the event a school should need to close for COVID-19 related reasons. These employees are working in adverse conditions and should not have to put their family's financial health at risk to continue to work in our schools. This legislation offers paycheck protection for all non-instructional educational employees when a school is closed, or an e-learning day is triggered for safety.
- 7 Governor Pritzker set the standard for return to work for education employees in August – test weekly or be vaccinated. Education employees have followed the Governor's directive. The members testing have done so for over 16 weeks, regularly and in accordance with the law. If there is an amendatory veto which makes this bill applicable only for vaccinated staff, it would not be fair to the thousands of educational employees who have been following the Governor's directive to be testing weekly. It's just not fair to employees who have been doing what the Governor asked them to do for months.



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