

Karen A. Cooper

Local 2012, AFT Professional Union at RIDE

Bill#: H5227

Dear Honorable Members of the House Labor Committee,

I am writing this testimony in support of the changes to H5227.

I have been employed at RIDE for over 40 years and served in the past as the Union President to Local 2012 for over 20 years. It was my honor and privilege to negotiate many collective bargaining agreements on behalf of the professional employees at RIDE. Only recently has the Union's authentication been called into question by the Council for Elementary and Secondary Education. For the dedicated state employees in Local 2012, it was a severe blow that plunged morale even further as contract negotiations were being procrastinated.

This bill will codify the rights of these employees and perhaps begin a healing process desperately needed as we continue our struggle during negotiations with RIDE management. A struggle we began last July 2024 and are hoping to complete soon to make Local 2012 employees whole like their brothers and sisters in other state agencies.

Thank you for your support in passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

Karen A. Cooper