

February 28, 2012

Washington State Senate Members
Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504



Dear Senators:

Organized labor, including unions listed below representing both classified and certificated school employees, stands strongly opposed to Substitute Senate Bill 6442 related to purchasing K-12 health insurance.



SSB 6442 purports to address the cost differential between individual and family coverage, and inefficiencies of current law pooling requirements. These are worthy goals which we share. These issues are created by the state funding formula for K-12 health insurance. SSB 6442 does nothing to address this problem.

SSB 6442 is not reform. It reduces the benefit level for K-12 employees, increases employee premium share and service charges, and transfers all additional costs increases to the school districts and employees. Moreover, it does nothing for part-time employees.



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We strongly believe that eliminating the ability of school employees' unions to locally bargain with their employers is not an appropriate response to these concerns. Collective bargaining with their employers is how workers get a democratic voice at the workplace, and it's the most efficient way to address these issues. If that right to bargain with our employers at the local level is eliminated, as SSB 6442 proposes, it diminishes the union's voice on a plethora of other issues at the bargaining table. As long as we preserve local collective bargaining with our employers, we remain committed to working on the issues of equity relative to cost differentials between individual and family coverage and efficiencies through alternate pooling options.



Please join with us in opposition to SSB 6442.

Thank you.



**JOINT COUNCIL
NO. 28**

Sincerely,

Washington State Labor Council
UFCW 21
Washington Education Association
Jt. Council of Stationary Engineers, IUOE Locals 286 & 609 AFL-CIO
Teamsters Joint Council No. 28