



June 5, 2014

Dear Members of the House State Government Committee:

On behalf of over 6,000 faculty and coaches at Pennsylvania's fourteen publicly-owned universities, I write to express APSCUF's firm opposition to House Bill 1507, which seeks to eliminate the right of public employees and their unions to negotiate payroll deduction of dues and voluntary political contributions. We view this legislation as a solution in search of a problem; it is purely an attempt to dilute the collective voice of public sector workers.

Payroll deductions for dues and political contributions have been negotiated through the collective bargaining process for decades. To institute this arrangement requires the approval of all parties, including a majority vote by employees through their approval of a collective bargaining agreement.

Like the hundreds of other deductions collected through modern payroll systems, union dues and voluntary political contributions impose virtually no cost on employers. If there were truly costs associated with deductions, it is hard to imagine employers would agree to collect payroll funds for healthcare, retirement, taxes, dental, vision, charitable donations, and dozens of other purposes. The cost, if any, is negligible enough that one union reports that the employer has never requested reimbursement despite decades of deducting voluntary political contributions.

Studies in other states underscore the negligible costs of payroll deductions. A 2011 fiscal analysis of a Michigan proposal to prohibit school districts from collecting union dues concludes, for example, "The process for payroll deductions for union dues and service fees is largely automated, so there is little work," and the study further notes that there would be minimal savings from making such a move.

A host of corporate and non-union entities receive funds through employer payroll deductions. Insurance companies, retirement funds, financial institutions, charitable organizations, and other entities have payroll deduction arrangements with public employers. Like unions, these groups are politically active, and they actively advocate for their issues. The singling out of unions demonstrates that the true purpose of this legislation is to weaken public sector unions; it is simply not about the money.

All employees benefit from a collective bargaining agreement because all employees receive representation by their union. Taking away the ability to collect dues through payroll deduction aims to weaken the ability of a union to represent all employees, members or not.

I would like to thank Chairman Metcalfe, Chairman Cohen, and members of the committee for considering APSCUF's position on HB1507.

Sincerely,

Kenneth M. Mash, President