

School Bus Unemployment Legislation 2019

2019 was our year to get School Bus Unemployment legislation passed. We were on the doorstep with the door wide open and could not get thru.

Here is the History, because this proposed legislation was introduced in the MN House of Representatives and made it thru the Jobs & Economic Development Committee Hearing but did not complete the same process in the MN Senate it was then placed in the "Omnibus bill". In Minnesota as the legislative session nears the end representatives from the respective committees (Jobs & Economic Development Finance in the House & Senate) form a Conference Committee to meet & discuss proposed legislation in the Omnibus bill. As we entered this phase we felt very good about our chances of this legislation being passed, the balance on this committee worked in our favor.

As this process began the Chairman of the Conference Committee, Senator Eric Pratt offered a compromise to our Bill. Teamsters Local 638, 120 & First Student all felt this was acceptable & may even work to our advantage.

What needs to happen first is the Leadership (Governor, House Majority Leader & Senate Majority Leader) need to come to a Budget agreement. This agreement needs to be in place by the Friday before the end of the session on Monday. Saturday, Sunday & Monday are the days the Conference Committees complete their work.

Because of the late finish to the Budget Agreement (Sunday 5/19) and not enough time for Conference Committees to complete their work the Governor had to call for a "Special Session" allowing these committees to finish. The Conference Committees were to complete their work without any "controversial" legislation.

As the Conference Committee process began Chairman Senator Pratt refused to include our Bill claiming it was "controversial".

How Senator Pratt can claim this is controversial legislation when we have a Republican Senator & Democrat House Member authoring the Legislation, letters from the four largest school bus companies in the country supporting it and First Student, likely the largest school bus company in Minnesota testifying at the Hearing is beyond us.

The end result is that this legislation is dead for the 2019 session. As I understand we will be able to attempt to move this forward again in the 2020 legislative session and next year is "Policy" focused and not a Budget year.

It is extremely frustrating after seven years to get this legislation moved thru the process and be on the doorstep then to suffer defeat because they could not reach a Budget Agreement on schedule. Had that happened there would not have been a "non-controversial" requirement included.

We would like to thank all the drivers who went down to the Capital and met with their legislators to move this process forward, it would not have happened without you. Thank you to Dawn Petersdorf Asst Steward at the Anoka location, Steve LeFeber from Local 120 and First Student Management who all testified at the School Bus Unemployment Hearing at the Capital.

In the world of politics it has been said many times, "It aint over till it's over" but this one is hard to digest. We will begin preparing for next year.

Scott Lecy
Recording Secretary/Business Agent
Teamsters Local 638