

**Government Administration and Elections Committee  
February 6, 2015  
Senate Bill 850 – Oppose**

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of workers employed in state and municipal government, and in the private sector.

I submit this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 850. The troubling thing about the bill is its attempt to define "grass roots lobbying"; largely because the bill's definition of lobbying is pretty much the definition of what is required of an engaged citizen in a representative democracy. Democratic governance is dependent on individuals getting involved in their communities, and we should seek to increase participation in the civic process wherever possible. SB 850 runs counter to that principle by placing new restrictions on individuals' ability to communicate directly with their elected officials, and threatening to limit participation by turning engaged citizens "lobbyists"; in the eyes of the State.

Every legislative session, CSEA SEIU Local 2001 makes a serious effort to empower our members to speak on the issues that are of concern to them. Much of what they do - talking to legislators, advocating for positions on bills or other administrative actions - would be considered grassroots lobbying under this bill. Our union's paid staff, in addition to our union officers and member volunteers who receive mileage reimbursements, travel the state to various union meetings in order to discuss issues important to our members, that could involve expressing views on legislative or administrative actions. Would they too need to register as lobbyists? In its current form, this bill is far too broad and fraught with unintended consequences.

The general assembly needs input from the public in order to do its job properly and should not attempt to redefine those trying to participate in our civic institutions as lobbyists. I urge you to reject SB 850.

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