

**Education Committee  
March 11, 2015  
House Bill 6968 – Support**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee:

My name is David Glidden and I am the Executive Director of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing public and private sector workers across the state including thousands of municipal and board of education workers. I'm here today to speak in support of H.B. No. 6968, an Act Authorizing the Use of School Paraprofessionals to Serve as Short-Term Substitute Teachers.

The function of ParaEducators in our schools is often misunderstood. Many adults don't know what ParaEducators do because their widespread use is a relatively new phenomenon; a phenomenon that coincides largely with the mainstreaming of students with special needs. Today's students, on the other hand, know what Paras do because ParaEducators are now a vital part of the delivery of education. ParaEducators get involved with virtually every aspect of education from developing lesson plans to engaging in intensive one-on-one instruction.

H.B. No. 6968 makes sense because, when it comes to the work of substituting for an absent teacher, ParaEducators are often a more effective option than a customary substitute teacher. That's because ParaEducators have first-hand experience with the children and lesson plans. The students would be taught by someone who knows them and is in their classroom every day. H.B. No. 6968 would allow school districts to use ParaEducators as substitutes for ten or fewer school days. That option, considering the learning curve associated with the use of a customary substitute, is a tool that should be in every district's toolbox. School districts should be allowed to fully utilize the resource they have in ParaEducators. Please support H.B. No. 6968.

David Glidden  
Executive Director, CSEA SEIU Local 2001