

For the record, my name is Marie Neisess. I am the President of CCEA. I'm speaking in opposition to SB4. Schools and busses are like Petri dishes of germs on any given day, but COVID 19 is life-threatening. Even with the best safety measures in place, educators and students will still be at risk. Putting a bill in place that protects the employer rather than the employee is unacceptable. Yet this bill asks educators to be okay with possible exposure to a life-threatening disease that will hold our employer free of any responsibility. Time and time again educators have been asked to go above and beyond the normal duties and responsibilities that come with teaching. The expectations of an educator have grown exponentially. On more than one occasion educators have placed themselves in harm's way and at times tragically lost their lives protecting their students such as during an active shooter incident. When did it become okay for educators to put their lives on the line? When did educators become expendable? The acceptable number of student deaths is zero. The acceptable number of educator deaths is zero. The need for this bill proves it is not safe to return. Unless the Governor and Legislators address the key issues of safety and employee protection, we cannot support employees working at a school site where it is possible to contract COVID-19. If an educator should contract the virus at their place of employment, the employee should not have to shoulder the financial burdens that may occur due to exposure to COVID-19 and must be eligible for workers' compensation. Additionally, legislation must be passed that allows for additional remedies in tort for school district employees. Educators did not sign up to put their lives and the lives of their students at risk. Please vote no on SB4.

Thank you.