



From the Desk of  
**Rep. Margaret Doherty**

*Margaret Doherty*

**Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU**

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## **VOTE YES ON HB 2544**

### **Level the playing field in the collective bargaining process**

Contract negotiations between public employers and employees are an opportunity to engage frontline workers and management and seek solutions to common workplace issues.

Negotiations can be challenging but they are generally fair for both sides. Issues arise when one side can bypass this process, upsetting the balance of power. Expedited bargaining (also called interim bargaining) is an example of how the normal process can be bypassed.

During the life of a contract, an employer has the exclusive power to make a change to policy that would be subject to bargaining but isn't exactly covered in the contract.

Once a change to the existing terms of employment is proposed, the employees must demand to bargain. They then have 90 days to bargain over the issue. After 90 days the employer can implement the change.

HB 2544 will level the playing field by allowing either party to ask for mediation if no resolution can be reached after 90 days. If there is still no resolution either party can ask for binding interest arbitration to reach a solution. The bill would also prohibit strikes over expedited bargaining issues.

HB 2544 will allow for a reasonable solution without unfairly burdening public employers. This is the existing procedure for strike barred units like firefighters and police.

**VOTE YES ON HB 2544**