



Eva Rippeteau Testimony on LC 45 section 14

June 22, 2020

Dear Co-chairs Courtney and Kotek, Vice-chairs Girod and Drazan and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on AFSCME's concerns around suspension of criminal court timelines and the impact on pre-trial custody. You will hear from some of my and member leaders as to why the current language is still problematic over what had been originally proposed.

My testimony is to address the question of how we can oppose this when I was indeed part of the work group. The simplest answer is because it is the right thing to do and should have been all along. What changed was not only my understanding of the proposal but sadly it also took for the context of our current calls for racial and social justice for me to realize that allowing this proposal to go through without fully calling out the concerns would be wrong. Fortunately, I have my members and co-workers to thank for giving me the needed push.

On the last day that the larger workgroup met, I sent the new language (what was later put into LC 37 and now LCs 45 & 84) to my member leaders that had been raising the concerns. I explained that it was the language a smaller workgroup had come up with as a compromise to language that was far more troubling in LC 29 and that I wasn't sure if there would be any way to get it improved beyond that because we were being told that something needed to be done. I did ask for feedback, and explained sooner would be better given that timelines were unknown.

As you all know, reading legislative proposals can be tricky and you lean on colleagues with issue expertise to walk you through it. I was doing this as a member of that workgroup, and my members did that after I shared with them the proposed language. When I did hear concerns, I flagged them for legislative staff, I then followed up a week later after I had finally been able to pull together a meeting and I better understood the concerns.

What I have also learned is that there was a difference in understanding about why we were all in the workgroup. One side thought that we were coming to the table because "something needed to be done" and we were figuring out how, the other side thought we were getting invited to patch a train that had left the station and was rapidly in route to the destination. I strongly believe that if you were to ask the workgroup members that thought they were patching the moving train, they would tell you they



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were doing so to improve a potentially terrible situation and given a choice would prefer to keep the statutes we have to provide timelines, flexibility and protections in place.

I am hopeful that we can find a solution to assure that we don't end up holding people in pre-trial custody, even if it is only temporary. I am happy to connect you with my members who are more apt to answer questions to help come up with that solution.

Thank you for your time and continued work.

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