

**PARAPROFESSIONALS, SCHOOL RELATED PERSONNEL, AND
SCHOOL HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS COMMITTEE**

SUPPORT OF SEN. MARKEY’S RESOLUTION IN U.S. CONGRESS

WHEREAS, paraprofessionals (also sometimes known as “paraeducators,” full-time, part-time, substitute, and all clerical staff) include Education assistants and instructional assistants who work in elementary schools, secondary schools, or public institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, education support staff (also sometimes known as “classified school employees” or “education support professionals”) include professionals who work in elementary schools, secondary schools, or public institutions of higher learning in clerical and administrative services, transportation services, food and nutrition services, custodial and maintenance services, health and student services, technical services and skilled trades; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 3,000,000 paraprofessionals nationally and education support staff are the frontline workers who transform schools in the United States from brick and mortar building to places of learning and support for more than 49,000,000 students across the United States; and

WHEREAS, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; school staff employment has fallen across positions and there are still 331,000 fewer school staff than before the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving schools without the necessary staff in almost every position; and

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WHEREAS, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of teachers has resulted in some paraprofessionals and education support staff being expected to assume the duties of teachers without commensurate compensation or benefits; and

WHEREAS, many paraprofessionals and education support staff (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff) are uncompensated for their work, and do not receive a living wage, much less a competitive, family sustaining living wage; and

WHEREAS, unlike most school employees, many paraprofessionals and education support staff are not full-time employees because their services, including those of bus drivers, food service workers, also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, and substitute paraprofessionals, and all clerical staff are delimited; and

WHEREAS, while paraprofessionals and education support staff are often the most diverse subset of school employees, are more likely to have grown up in the communities they serve, and are the trusted school community members for many students and parents, the voices of paraprofessionals and education support staff are not always valued in forming school policies; and

WHEREAS, paraprofessionals and education support staff often serve students facing systemic barriers, but are often excluded from professional growth and development opportunities; and

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WHEREAS, like many school employees, paraprofessional and education support staff are too often subject to workplace violence and other safety hazards, including contaminants and extreme temperatures; and

WHEREAS, paraprofessionals and education support staff deserve real solutions that would empower them to –

- (1) Work in a stable, safe environment;
- (2) Receive livable and competitive wages, access to sufficient hours, and fair compensation for their work;
and
- (3) Have a voice on the job and meaningful input in school policy; and

WHEREAS, respecting professionals and education support staff is essential to creating and maintaining safe and supportive environments that are conducive to students learning and thriving, and

WHEREAS, Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) seeks to recognize the rights, respect, and dignity that paraprofessionals and education support staff (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, and substitute paraprofessionals, and all clerical staff) deserve as they continue to care for and educate the next generation: and

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that it is the position of the OFT that paraprofessionals and education support staff (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff)---

(A) should be compensated at a rate that is a livable, competitive wage; and

(B) should be considered to be eligible employees under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.); and

(C) should be entitled to 16 weeks of paid family and medical leave;

(D) should have access to meaningful and free professional growth and development opportunities that provide a path to career advancement; and

(E) should have sufficient resources and supplies to enable them to do their jobs effectively, including up-to-date technology; and

(F) should have access to training and appropriate personal protective equipment; and

(G) should have representation in organizations that determine policies that may effect the working conditions of paraprofessionals (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff) and education support staff; and

(H) should receive notification and the opportunity to provide significant input about the implementation of electronic monitoring, data, algorithms, and artificial intelligence technology in the applicable school and should receive

high quality professional development as new technologies are introduced; and

(I) Should have adequate notice and opportunity to participate, when

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appropriate, in individualized education program meetings, behavior intervention team meetings, and other similar meetings relating to the students the paraprofessionals and education support staff support to the extent permitted by law; and

(J) should experience a safe and healthy working environment free from recognized hazards that cause or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm; and

(K) should experience appropriate staffing levels to ensure that students have adequate support and that paraprofessionals and educational support staff (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, and substitute paraprofessionals), and all clerical staff can complete their job effectively, and safely; and

(2) in recognition of the importance of collective bargaining in maintaining good working conditions employers of paraprofessionals and educational support staff should (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff)—

(A) Engage in good faith negotiations; and

(B) Strive to reach timely and just contracts that fairly compensate and protect paraprofessionals and education support staff; and

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(C) refrain from replacing paraprofessionals or educational support staff (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff) who

engage in a strike; and

(D) refrain from locking out such workers; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that nothing in this “resolving clause” should be interpreted to supersede, or as an

expression of the OFT’s support for any law that would supersede employment

terms or conditions agreed upon in collective bargaining agreements that are

more beneficial to paraprofessionals and education support (also sometimes known as full-time, part-time, substitute paraprofessionals, and clerical staff) staff than those described in the resolving clause.