



OPPOSE HB 4416 (Evans)/SB 3286 (Villivalam) Unemployment Insurance



HB 4416 would make educational support personnel — including paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers, and food service staff — eligible for unemployment benefits during scheduled school breaks beginning June 1, 2026. Education support professionals are valued and essential members of our school communities. However, this proposal creates significant fiscal and operational concerns for districts statewide:



Cost Concerns:

- Data from ~25% of Illinois school districts ≈ \$7 million per week in unemployment benefit costs.
 - Estimated statewide impact (excluding CPS) ≈ \$28 million per week.
 - Estimated annual cost (9-week summer) ≈ \$252 million per year.
- CPS ≈ \$200+ million annually

TOTAL ≈ \$452 MILLION ANNUALLY



Unfunded Mandate

- Expands unemployment eligibility without state funding.
- Increases district unemployment insurance costs and contribution rates.
- Shifts financial responsibility to local property taxpayers.
- Diverts limited dollars from classrooms and student services.



Districts are already managing:

- Inflation and rising operational costs.
- Proration of Mandated Categoricals (MCATs) especially regular and special education transportation.
- Staffing shortages

This permanent expansion of unemployment benefits creates a significant and ongoing unfunded mandate and will result in financial volatility, making responsible multi-year budgeting more difficult for school districts.



Loss of Local Control:

School districts vary widely in:

- Size and staffing models
- School calendars
- Collective bargaining agreements

A statewide mandate removes local flexibility to structure employment agreements based on community needs.

Why This Matters for Students:

Every new mandate without funding results in:

- Increased pressure on property taxpayers
- Reduced classroom resources
- Fewer program investments
- Less financial flexibility during emergencies

Well-intended policy should not unintentionally reduce support for students.

