

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Chair, Assembly Public Employment
and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

April 2, 2026

RE: AB 2142 (Garcia)

Position: Sponsor

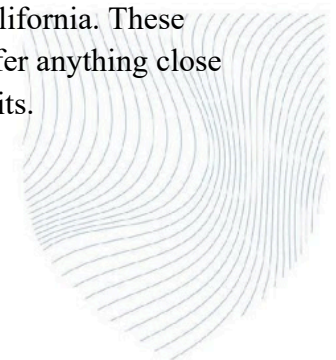
Dear Chair McKinnor

CFT—A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO, is proud to sponsor AB 2142 (Garcia), which will better protect classified workers by clarifying existing law around short-term temporary classified education workers.

In the education system, workers with jobs not requiring certification qualifications are known as "classified" workers. The descriptor "classified" stems from existing Education Code (EC) language requiring local district boards to group these workers into different classifications. Paraeducators, custodians, administrative staff, and maintenance workers are a few examples, but many, many others exist. While types of classified workers are varied, one factor unites them all: schools cannot run without them.

When the front office is understaffed, essential school functions begin to collapse. When custodians have too much to do, hazardous conditions arise that threaten school safety. When the classroom needs a paraeducator but doesn't have one, teachers are overwhelmed and educational quality suffers. That's why we must ensure that all possible steps are taken to recruit and retain qualified and effective classified workers throughout our education system, from transitional kindergarten through higher education.

Sadly, the often inadequate wages and benefits offered to classified workers mean that the previously described negative outcomes exist in far too many schools across California. These positions commonly pay hourly rates barely above the minimum wage, don't offer anything close to full-time hours, and leave workers unable to even qualify for CalPERS benefits.



Worse yet, we've heard many examples of employers taking advantage of a certain section of the Education Code to further degrade wage and benefit standards for these struggling workers. EC Sections 45103 and 88103 allow education employers to bring on "short-term employees" for up to 75% of a school year and deny them every single right explicitly guaranteed by law to classified workers. As concerning as this section of law is, the reality is even worse: sometimes these workers are kept on as short-term employees for years if not decades, leaving dedicated employees languishing in unacceptable working conditions for far too long and in clear violation of the law.

For example, classified workers are guaranteed certain rehire rights that reward seniority when bringing workers back on after layoffs. Another section of the Education Code guarantees vacation days, accrued at the rate of 5/6 of a day for each month of work, to those employed for six months or longer. A similar section ensures that classified workers earn 12 sick days for every year on the job. Short-term employees, meanwhile, are denied all of these rights and many more. Action must be taken to ensure that, at a minimum, workers who have passed the aforementioned 75% cutoff are immediately awarded all rights and benefits guaranteed by current law.

AB 2142 (Garcia) clarifies that workers employed for more than 75% of the school year are automatically placed into the classified service. The bill further details that employers cannot skirt the law by bringing workers back in future years and continue refusing to award workers their earned rights and benefits as members of the classified service.

We strongly believe this language is a clarification of current law and not something new that employers must invest resources assessing how to comply with. If an employer is keeping workers out of the classified service following this 75% cutoff, that employer is in violation of this statute, and this bill does not change that. All this bill does is help employers understand their responsibilities under the law.

With these reforms, we take a small but significant step toward rewarding classified staff for their essential service. While this bill does not raise wages or create any new benefits, it does help guarantee that workers at least will earn the benefits and rights established by current law. Such a reform will help us keep the classified workers we currently have, attract new ones, and better protect the workers doing and devoting so much to keep our education system running strong.

We urge you to support AB 2142 (Garcia) when it comes before you in the Assembly Education Committee. Please feel free to contact CFT Legislative Representative Mitch Steiger at msteiger@cft.org or (916) 524-5182 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Mitch Steiger
Legislative Representative
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