



# IDAHO STATE FIRE COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

February 6, 2019 -  
Attachment 1

February 5, 2019

Chairman and Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee VIA Email

Re: House Bill 42- Labor Negotiations

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association (ISFCA), which represents the elected fire district commissioners within Idaho, ISFCA does not support HB42 as currently proposed. ISFCA strongly supports the requirement that collective bargaining take place in open meetings. We agree that it is in the best interest of the public to have a high degree of transparency relative to negotiations with labor groups and our governing boards, and the conduct of public business in general. For that reason, ISFCA supports lifting the sunset clause on the current statute, 74-206A. However, the additional changes to 74-206A proposed in HB42 create a disservice to the governing boards and ISFCA is strongly opposed to these changes.

The addition of "***provided that all decisions regarding a labor contract offer or counteroffers are made in open session***" represents a disadvantage to tax payers and their duly elected governmental boards when negotiating with the unions. In particular, bargaining agents will be accused of "bad faith" negotiations if they propose anything other than what was explicitly authorized by the fire district board or city council during a negotiation. This will dramatically reduce the ability of negotiators who work on behalf of the tax payers to negotiate the best possible agreement.

Furthermore, governmental entities will be limited to only what is explicitly approved, the likely effect of this legislation will be to force direct negotiations with a governing board while allowing professional union negotiators at the table. This is a union advantage.

The current statute, 74-206A, is transparent on both sides and the playing field is level. All negotiations take place in open meetings, and all approval of collective bargaining agreements and final decisions are made by governing boards in open meetings.

House Bill 42 would give an unfair bargaining advantage to the union at a cost to the tax payers, at worst, and simply cause a headache for public boards at best.

**If 74-206A isn't broken, don't change it.**

Sincerely,

David "Rudy" Rudebaugh  
ISFCA President

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**"To inform, educate, represent, lead and serve the fire districts of Idaho in the preservation and protection of life and property."**