**Dear Members:**

**In 2007, Missouri-NEA won a lawsuit that guaranteed the right of all Missouri public employees to collectively bargain with their employer. Since then, we have been able to bargain labor agreements to improve our working conditions. Now, anti-union, anti-teacher forces are pushing back on this progress.**

**In May of this year, the Missouri Legislature passed a public employee collective bargaining law, known House Bill 1413, which goes into effect on August 28, 2018. This law will make it exceptionally difficult for school and other public employees to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right of collective bargaining. Among other features, this law:**

* **Severely restricts what terms and conditions of employment may be collectively bargained;**
* **Seeks to prohibit the free speech rights of public school employees to communicate with the public and their employers about their working conditions;**
* **Imposes unprecedented, burdensome financial disclosure requirements on public employee unions and their officers.**

**MNEA and NEA lawyers believe that this law is unconstitutional. Both organizations are willing to financially support a lawsuit seeking to invalidate it. A lawsuit, however, needs plaintiffs – i.e. parties who bring the lawsuit to raise the constitutional issues. MNEA and its lawyers believe the FFNEA is in an excellent position to serve as a plaintiff. We will be parties to the lawsuit with a coalition of other public employee unions.**

**Every lawsuit must be brought against a defendant. Our school district must be named as a defendant because even though it did not pass the law, it will be responsible for enforcing it. MNEA attorneys alerted the attorney for the district in advance about the filing of the lawsuit and the reason it is named as a defendant. State agencies will also be defendants. The lawsuit was filed today in St. Louis County Circuit Court. There may be publicity about it, but it will take time for a decision. We will keep you posted about developments.**

**We can be proud that our organization is a part of this crucial effort to defend the constitutional rights of our members and all Missouri public employees. Standing united, we will protect our rights.**

**Should you be asked about the lawsuit by reporters or others, politely refer them to the PR spokesperson, Erin Schrimpf at** [**eschrimpf@tightline.com**](mailto:eschrimpf@tightline.com) **or (816) 863-3970. We do not want partial or incorrect information to come from any of us (including myself). Erin was hired by the coalition of unions supporting the lawsuit and is prepared to handle the press and other officials that raise questions.**

**If you have any questions, please contact me at** [**lsammelmann@gmail.com**](mailto:lsammelmann@gmail.com) **and I will try to do my best to answer.**

**Lori Sammelmann**

**FFNEA President**