

AFT-NH Testimony Opposing SB 430

From Debrah Howes, President AFT-NH

April 8, 2026



To Chairwoman Noble and members of the House Education Policy and Administration Committee:

My name is Debrah Howes, and I am President of the American Federation of Teachers New Hampshire. I am here today on behalf of our more than 3,500 members who work in PreK through grade 12 public education, public services, and both private and public colleges and universities across the Granite State. We are taxpayers and community members, and many of us are parents or grandparents of children in New Hampshire public schools.

AFT-NH opposes SB 430 because it is harmful to public school students. It weakens student trust in the adults in their schools and threatens student safety. The bill requires educators to respond “completely and honestly” to any written parent request on any topic about a child within ten days, even when the information is sensitive. Many students rely on teachers, counselors, and paraeducators as safe adults at school. If students believe that anything they share could be reported to a parent on demand, they may stop asking for help. This is especially dangerous for students dealing with bullying, mental health challenges, family conflict, or housing insecurity. Although the bill includes a narrow exception for imminent physical harm, that standard is a very high bar and does not cover many real situations where confidentiality helps protect a child’s well-being. Public schools work best when students feel safe, supported, and respected, and **SB 430** undermines that foundation.

SB 430 is also harmful to teachers and school staff because it creates fear, extra workload, and professional risk without improving learning. The bill treats a failure to answer a parent’s request as a violation of the educator code of conduct, which could trigger investigations or discipline. This shifts teachers’ time away from teaching and student support and toward responding to legal-style requests. It also discourages professional judgment by replacing it with a one-size-fits-all mandate that ignores classroom realities. Educators already work closely with families, but trust and collaboration cannot be built through threats. Educators deserve a voice in policies that affect their work, along with fair wages and respect for their expertise. Laws like **SB 430** push skilled educators out of the profession and make it harder for public schools to meet students’ needs.

We urge you to find **SB 430** inexpedient to legislate.

Sincerely,

Debrah Howes

Debrah Howes

President, AFT-New Hampshire