



Special District Association of Colorado

April 27, 2010
The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the Special District Association of Colorado (SDA) and its Board of Directors, we are writing to express SDA's opposition to S.3194, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2009, or any similar federal legislation.

The Special District Association is proud to represent over 153 fire districts in Colorado. Our membership includes two of the five largest professional departments in the state, the South Metro Fire Rescue Authority and the West Metro Fire Protection District, as well as smaller rural districts such as Ault Fire Protection District and Artesia Fire Protection District. While many of our member fire districts have collective bargaining agreements, others do not, and feel that this is largely because of their ability to work cooperatively and constructively with the labor unions without requiring collective bargaining. We, as representatives of special districts, and especially, fire protection districts, believe that the federal government should not undermine these relationships by mandating specific working conditions, including collective bargaining, which is the crux of S.3194.

We are not aware of fire districts asking for this legislation.

Current Colorado law permits local governments to enter into collective bargaining agreements with public employee's labor unions, if employees so request. S. 3194 would eliminate a local choice, which is vital to the governing of Colorado special districts. Imposing a federal mandate is a clear usurpation of our members' right to set community-based policies regarding not only employment, but also standards of coverage.

We urge you to oppose the federal mandatory collective bargaining legislation and maintain the respect for the longstanding principle of non-interference in employer-employee relations that has existed among the federal, state, and local governments. It is important for us to convey this position to you; and we believe you should know how Colorado special districts feel regarding this proposed legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this critical legislation and we hope you will oppose it on behalf of Colorado. We are always available to meet during your breaks or weekend trips home to bring our members face-to-face so that you can have firsthand knowledge of their position.

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