

**Testimony of Sean M. Spiller  
NJEA Vice President  
New Jersey Assembly Labor Committee  
A-3664 and A-3395  
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Good morning. I am Sean Spiller, a high school science teacher in Wayne currently serving as Vice President of the New Jersey Education Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.

NJEA strongly supports both A-3664, which concerns due process of public school employees, and A-3395, which concerns subcontracting of school employees, because we believe that children learn best when the schools are staffed by caring, consistent professionals who they can count on every day.

Educational Support Professionals – also known as ESPs – play an integral role in educating New Jersey’s students. ESPs are the first people children see when they get on the bus in the morning, they are the last person they see before they go home to their families at the end of the day. ESPs keep our schools safe and clean. They keep our children healthy. They nourish our children in lunch room. They create the necessary environment for student success in our public schools.

Their dedication and commitment are unwavering. Yet the more than 50,000 ESPs who help make New Jersey’s public schools the best in the nation too often are not treated with the same fairness and respect as their certificated colleagues.

We’re here today because we are asking you to Fix the Unfairness. I see my ESP colleagues being treated as “lesser” than their certificated counterparts despite their invaluable contributions to the success of our schools and students.

ESPs are worth the peace of mind that both A-3664 and A-3395 would help bring them. That security would go beyond just the employees themselves. It would be felt by everyone in the school community, because these bills would make our schools more stable and consistent.

I work with high school students. Take it from me: my students, and all students, need so many of us working together to succeed. They need to feel safe. They need to feel comfortable. They need to feel accepted and included. They need understanding. They need patience. They need the chance to grow and thrive.

And, there’s only one thing that can provide all of those elements our students need: a consistent and committed team of adults dedicated to working with them. My ESP colleagues

are equal partners in that team, and they deserve equal dignity, respect and fair treatment on the job.

I'd be remiss if I didn't highlight that the dedication of ESPs doesn't stop at school. Many live in the very same communities where they work. They are coaches, volunteers, mentors and leaders. They are an important connection between school, home and community. However many hours they spend on their job, their contribution goes far beyond that.

Two weeks ago, we hosted our the 2019 NJEA Educational Support Professional Conference, where we saw more than 500 ESP members sacrificed their weekends at home to spend time learning how to be better advocates for their students and our great public schools. That's the dedication they bring to their work every day as well.

Thank you, again, for hearing this testimony this morning. NJEA strongly supports both A-3664 and A-3395 and we thank the committee for hearing these important bills and urge you to pass them. Thank you.