

Chair and Members,

My name is Danielle Cockrell, and I have been a classroom Math teacher for eighteen years and a proud member of Cy-Fair AFT. I'm here today to speak in opposition to HB 5019.

Let me be clear—this bill isn't about education. It's about power. It's about silencing the very people who are doing the hard work in classrooms every day. HB 5019 would eliminate payroll deduction for professional organizations—groups that provide me and my colleagues with legal protections, professional development, and most importantly, a voice. This bill tries to define those groups as political simply because we speak up for public schools. That's not politics—that's advocacy. And it's our right.

At a time when Texas educators are burning out, when districts are struggling to staff classrooms, and when basic school funding still hasn't passed the Senate, this is what we're debating?

Where are the bills that raise the basic allotment?

Where is the funding for school counselors, librarians, and nurses?

Where is the legislation that enforces a duty-free lunch or caps class sizes?

Those are the real priorities in the Educators' Bill of Rights we've developed as a union, and this Legislature has failed to move them. Instead, HB 5019 takes aim at the few protections educators have left. It censors training, undermines professional development, and even restricts what kind of insurance and resources we can access—all under the guise of "neutrality."

But make no mistake: this bill is not neutral. It's punitive. And it sends a chilling message to educators across Texas that our voices are not welcome here. If lawmakers are serious about keeping educators in the classroom, they need to stop playing politics with our rights and start passing bills that actually support us.

Please vote no on HB 5019.

Thank you.