
General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committee

HB 2670

Brief Description: Concerning limited periodic incremental salary increases for special agents.

Sponsors: Representative Hudgins.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits salary increases to be granted to Washington State Gambling Commission Special Agents without demonstration of difficulty in retaining qualified employees, and without approval of the Director of Financial Management.

Hearing Date: 1/31/12

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The Gambling Commission (Commission) is an executive branch state agency responsible for licensing and regulating all authorized social gambling activities in the state, except for horse racing and the state lottery. The Commission investigates and controls unauthorized and illegal gambling activities. It also co-regulates tribal gaming activities pursuant to compacts between the tribes and the state. Gambling Commission Special Agents are Limited Authority Law Enforcement Officers that are required to have various levels of law enforcement training, depending on assignment. The Special Agents conduct licensing operations, field monitoring and investigations, and ensure tribal compact compliance in cooperation with tribal gaming agencies.

Generally, state employment positions are either exempt, general service, or Washington Management Service (WMS). General service employees and some categories of exempt employees may collectively bargain if they so elect. For example, Washington State Patrol officers, higher education faculty, and graduate students are exempt employees but may

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collectively bargain. For employees who collectively bargain, salary and wage increases are determined as provided in the existing contract. Commission Special Agents are exempt employees that are not eligible to collectively bargain.

Since February 18, 2009, and through the remainder of the 2011-13 fiscal biennium, no performance-based awards or incentives may be granted to state employees. Agencies are also prohibited from granting a salary increase for exempt or WMS employees during the 2011-13 fiscal biennium, except in cases where a demonstrated recruitment and retention issue exists; also, in the case of executive branch agencies, the Director of the Office of Financial Management has approved the increase. Agencies that do give salary increases to exempt or WMS employees are required to submit reports by July 31, 2012, and July 31, 2013, describing the increases given and the reasons for granting them.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Gambling Commission is exempted from the prohibition on salary or wage increases for Special Agents. The Commission may grant salary increases to Special Agents, who are exempt employees, without the current requirements of demonstrating difficulty in retaining qualified employees, ensuring that the increases can be provided within existing resources, avoiding adverse impacts on client services, or without the approval of the Director of Financial Management.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.