

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 6445

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Labor & Workforce Development

**Title:** An act relating to the definition of uniformed personnel for the purposes of public employees' collective bargaining.

**Brief Description:** Amending the definition of uniformed personnel for the purposes of public employees' collective bargaining.

**Sponsors:** Senators Roach and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/26/14 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill  
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Includes as "uniformed personnel" for the purposes of interest arbitration under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act, court protection employees and court marshals who meet certain criteria.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Green, G. Hunt, Moeller and Ormsby.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Trudes Tango (786-7384).

**Background:**

The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) provides for collective bargaining of wages, hours, and working conditions by counties, cities, and other political

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

subdivisions and their employees. For certain uniformed personnel, the PECBA recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. To resolve impasses involving uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding interest arbitration.

The "uniformed personnel" under the PECBA with rights to binding interest arbitration are:

- law enforcement officers employed by a city or town with a population of 2,500 or more and law enforcement officers employed by a county with a population of 10,000 or more;
- correctional employees of a county jail in a county with a population of 70,000 or more and who are trained for and charged with the responsibility of controlling and maintaining custody of inmates;
- peace officers employed by a port district in a county with a population of 1 million or more;
- certain security forces of nuclear power plants;
- firefighters;
- employees with certain firefighting duties employed by a port district in a county with a population of 1 million or more;
- employees of fire departments who dispatch exclusively either fire or emergency medical services, or both; and
- certain paramedics and emergency medical technicians.

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#### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The definition of "uniformed personnel" under the PECBA includes court protection employees or court marshals who are:

- trained for and commissioned by the county sheriff; and
- charged with the responsibility of enforcing laws, protecting and maintaining security in all county-owned or contracted property, and performing any other duties assigned by the sheriff of the county or mandated by order.

#### **Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The original bill was limited to court protection employees and court marshals in counties with a population of 1 million or more.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available. New fiscal note requested on February 26, 2014.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Most of the corrections officers in King County are already covered by this statute, and this bill will extend the same rights to those limited commissioned court marshals in King County. The court marshals have prior law enforcement experience and are often retired officers. The Legislature did not intend for these employees to engage in strikes. Strikes or slow-downs would shut down the King County court system. All court personnel deserve interest arbitration, not just those in one county. The amendment would apply this bill to other counties.

(Opposed) Expanding binding interest arbitration will cost the counties money. Counties have not experienced any revenue growth. Most of the employees of counties have binding interest arbitration rights, and it is costly. The bill should be amended to allow the arbitrator to take into consideration the employer's financial ability to pay.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Jared Karstetter, King County Court Protection; and Pat Thompson, Washington State Council of County and City Employees.

(Opposed) Eric Johnson, Washington State Association of Counties.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.