

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5507

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, February 22, 1995

Title: An act relating to public employees' collective bargaining.

Brief Description: Revising the collective bargaining provisions for law enforcement officers.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey, Roach, Pelz, Swecker, Prentice and Sutherland.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/30/95, 2/22/95 [DPS, DNPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5507 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Deccio, Franklin, Fraser and Hale.

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Newhouse and Wojahn.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). For uniformed personnel, the act recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. To resolve disputes involving these uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding arbitration if negotiations for a contract reach impasse and cannot be resolved through mediation.

Until July 1, 1995, "uniformed personnel," among others, include law enforcement officers in the larger jurisdictions (cities with a population of 15,000 or more), and in counties with a population of 70,000 or more. Beginning July 1, 1995, uniform personnel will include, among others, law enforcement officers in cities with a population of 7,500 or more and in counties with a population of 35,000 or more. Law enforcement officers include county sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, city police officers, or town marshals.

Summary of Substitute Bill: For purposes of the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act, "uniform personnel" include, among others, law enforcement officers in cities with a population of 2,500 or more and in counties with a population of 10,000 or more.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Changes are made in the underlying bill reflecting the need to merge amendments made to this statute in previous years. The only substantive change is that while the original bill completely eliminated the population

threshold for purposes of establishing which law enforcement officers are eligible for arbitration, the substitute bill only lowers it.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 1995.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The availability of arbitration creates a level playing field in the bargaining process. Absent arbitration, law enforcement officers in small jurisdictions have little choice but to take what is forced on them by management. The bill will force good faith bargaining in the smaller jurisdictions.

Testimony Against: The cost of preparing for and participating in arbitration are substantial. This bill will impose significant costs on small cities and counties that are already financially strapped. The bill violates the spirit of Initiative 601 by imposing such costs on local jurisdictions.

Testified: PRO: Mike Patrick, Washington State Council of Police Officers; Mike Ryherd, Teamsters; CON: Bill Vogler, Washington State Association of Counties, Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.