

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5251

As Passed House:

April 4, 2007

Title: An act relating to the term of existence of a collective bargaining agreement.

Brief Description: Establishing the term of existence of a collective bargaining agreement.

Sponsors: By Senators Kohl-Welles, Clements, Hobbs, Parlette, Pridemore and Hatfield.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 3/15/07, 3/27/07 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/4/07, 70-26.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Increases from three to six years the maximum allowable term for certain collective bargaining agreements between cities, counties, municipal corporations, and school districts and their respective employees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Crouse, Green, Moeller and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Condotta, Ranking Minority Member and Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

Employees of cities, counties, municipal corporations, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). Various other public employees also bargain under the auspices of the PECBA, including: Washington State Patrol officers and other specified "uniformed personnel," classified employees at school districts and technical colleges, teaching assistants

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at the University of Washington, individual providers (home care workers), and family child care providers.

Under the PECBA, the employer and exclusive bargaining representative have a mutual obligation to negotiate in good faith and to execute a written agreement over specified mandatory subjects of bargaining (grievance procedures and personnel matters, including wages, hours and working conditions). A collective bargaining agreement is not valid if it provides for a term of more than three years.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

Under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA), the maximum allowable term for collective bargaining agreements between cities, counties, municipal corporations, and school districts and their respective employees is increased from three to six years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) With up to three-year terms, the parties can be well into a term before they reach agreement on non-wage issues. Then they are right back at the bargaining table.

With up to six-year terms, cities will be able to be more efficient. Some small cities have up to seven bargaining units, and are almost constantly bargaining.

This bill will help improve the working environment. Long negotiations have a negative impact on morale.

The bill does not cover state employee groups. Given the state budget cycle, six-year bargaining agreements would be untenable.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Owen Linch, Joint Council of Teamsters; Pat Thompson, Washington State Council of County and City Employees; Paul Pearce, Skamania County Commissioner; and Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.