

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5199

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor & Commerce, February 20, 2019

Title: An act relating to granting certain correctional employees binding interest arbitration.

Brief Description: Granting certain correctional employees binding interest arbitration.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Conway, McCoy, Hunt, Das, Saldaña, Wilson, C., Hasegawa and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 2/19/19, 2/20/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Grants correctional employees of regional jails and certain juvenile detention centers interest arbitration under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Saldaña, Walsh and Wellman.

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

Background: The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act. 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 certain uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding interest arbitration if negotiations for a contract reach impasse and cannot be resolved through mediation. Under interest arbitration, an impartial third-party makes decisions regarding the unresolved terms of the contract.

Uniformed personnel include, among others:

- firefighters;
- law enforcement officers in cities and counties of a certain size;

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- general authority peace officers and firefighters employed by certain port districts;
- certain correctional employees of jails in counties with populations of 70,000 or more;
- security forces at nuclear power plants; and
- Washington State Patrol officers.

Regional Jails. Two or more local governments, or one or more local governments and the state, may create and operate regional jails. Regional jails may be governed by representatives from multiple jurisdictions in compliance with the Interlocal Cooperation Act.

Summary of Bill: The following correctional employees are added to the definition of uniformed personnel and granted interest arbitration under PECBA:

- employees of a regional jail who are trained for and charged with the responsibility of controlling and maintaining custody of inmates in the jail and safeguarding inmates from other inmates; and
- employees of a juvenile detention center located in a county with a population over 1,500,000 who who are trained for and charged with the responsibility of controlling and maintaining custody of inmates in the jail and safeguarding inmates from other inmates.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently, these correctional employees do not have the ability to strike which gives the employer an incentive to stall until it can implement its last-best offer. Interest arbitration would save time and money and reduce employer-employee tension. The facilities these corrections employees work for are understaffed, underfunded, and have trouble retaining employees. Other correctional employees and uniformed officers already have interest arbitration. This bill levels the playing field.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Karen Keiser, Prime Sponsor; Jason Smith, King County Juvenile Detention Guild; Adam Hoppis, King Juvenile Detention Officer; Joshua Pennell, SCORE Jail Officer Guild; Joseph Limata, SCORE Jail Officer Guild; Jim Cline, citizen; Kevin McAfee, King County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.