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**SENATE BILL 5237**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Hewitt, Baumgartner, King, Braun, Honeyford, and Fraser

AN ACT Relating to restrictions on when representation under a public collective bargaining agreement may be challenged; amending RCW 41.56.070, 41.59.070, 41.76.020, 41.80.080, 49.39.040, and 47.64.135; and adding a new section to chapter 28B.52 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 41.56.070 and 2012 c 117 s 83 are each amended to read as follows:

In the event the commission elects to conduct an election to ascertain the exclusive bargaining representative, and upon the request of a prospective bargaining representative showing written proof of at least thirty percent representation of the public employees within the unit, the commission shall hold an election by secret ballot to determine the issue. The ballot shall contain the name of such bargaining representative and of any other bargaining representative showing written proof of at least ten percent representation of the public employees within the unit, together with a choice for any public employee to designate that he or she does not desire to be represented by any bargaining agent. Where more than one organization is on the ballot and neither of the three or more choices receives a majority vote of the public employees within the bargaining unit, a run-off election shall be held. The run-off ballot shall contain the two choices which received the largest and second-largest number of votes. No question concerning representation may be raised within one year of a certification or attempted certification. Where there is a valid collective bargaining agreement in effect, no question of representation may be raised except during the period not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the expiration date of the agreement. Any agreement which contains a provision for automatic renewal or extension of the agreement shall not be a valid agreement; nor shall any agreement be valid if it provides for a term of existence for more than three years, except that any agreement entered into between school districts, cities, counties, or municipal corporations, and their respective employees, may provide for a term of existence of up to six years.

**Sec.**  RCW 41.59.070 and 1975 1st ex.s. c 288 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Any employee organization may file a request with the commission for recognition as the exclusive representative. Such request shall allege that a majority of the employees in an appropriate collective bargaining unit wish to be represented for the purpose of collective bargaining by such organization, shall describe the grouping of jobs or positions which constitute the unit claimed to be appropriate, shall be supported by credible evidence demonstrating that at least thirty percent of the employees in the appropriate unit desire the organization requesting recognition as their exclusive representative, and shall indicate the name, address, and telephone number of any other interested employee organization, if known to the requesting organization.

(2) The commission shall determine the exclusive representative by conducting an election by secret ballot, except under the following circumstances:

(a) In instances where a serious unfair labor practice has been committed which interfered with the election process and precluded the holding of a fair election, the commission shall determine the exclusive bargaining representative by an examination of organization membership rolls or a comparison of signatures on organization bargaining authorization cards.

(b) In instances where there is then in effect a lawful written collective bargaining agreement between the employer and another employee organization covering any employees included in the unit described in the request for recognition, the request for recognition shall not be entertained unless it shall be filed within the time limits prescribed in subsection (3) of this section for decertification or a new recognition election.

(c) In instances where within the previous twelve months another employee organization has been lawfully recognized or certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of any employees included in the unit described in the request for recognition, the request for recognition shall not be entertained.

(d) In instances where the commission has within the previous twelve months conducted a secret ballot election involving any employees included in the unit described in the request for recognition in which a majority of the valid ballots cast chose not to be represented by any employee organization, the request for recognition shall not be entertained.

(3) Whenever the commission conducts an election to ascertain the exclusive bargaining representative, the ballot shall contain the name of the proposed bargaining representative and of any other bargaining representative showing written proof of at least ten percent representation of the educational employees within the unit, together with a choice for any educational employee to designate that he or she does not desire to be represented by any bargaining agent. Where more than one organization is on the ballot and neither of the three or more choices receives a majority of the valid ballots cast by the educational employees within the bargaining unit, a run-off election shall be held. The run-off ballot shall contain the two choices which receive the largest and second largest number of votes. No question concerning representation may be raised within one year of a certification or attempted certification. Where there is a valid collective bargaining agreement in effect, no question of representation may be raised except during the period not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the expiration date of the agreement. In the event that a valid collective bargaining agreement, together with any renewals or extensions thereof, has been or will be in existence for three years, then the question of representation may be raised not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the third anniversary date of the agreement or any renewals or extensions thereof as long as such renewals and extensions do not exceed three years; and if the exclusive bargaining representative is removed as a result of such procedure, the then existing collective bargaining agreement shall be terminable by the new exclusive bargaining representative so selected within sixty days after its certification or terminated on its expiration date, whichever is sooner, or if no exclusive bargaining representative is so selected, then the agreement shall be deemed to be terminated at its expiration date or as of such third anniversary date, whichever is sooner.

(4) Within the time limits prescribed in subsection (3) of this section, a petition may be filed signed by at least thirty percent of the employees of a collective bargaining unit, then represented by an exclusive bargaining representative, alleging that a majority of the employees in that unit do not wish to be represented by an employee organization, requesting that the exclusive bargaining representative be decertified, and indicating the name, address and telephone number of the exclusive bargaining representative and any other interested employee organization, if known. Upon the verification of the signatures on the petition, the commission shall conduct an election by secret ballot as prescribed by subsection (3) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 41.76.020 and 2002 c 356 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

The commission shall certify exclusive bargaining representatives in accordance with the procedures specified in this section.

(1) No question concerning representation may be raised within one year following issuance of a certification under this section.

(2) If there is a valid collective bargaining agreement in effect, no question concerning representation may be raised except during the period not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the expiration date of the agreement: PROVIDED, That in the event a valid collective bargaining agreement, together with any renewals or extensions thereof, has been or will be in existence for more than three years,then a question concerning representation may be raised not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the third anniversary date or any subsequent anniversary date of the agreement; and if the exclusive bargaining representative is removed as the result of such procedure, the collective bargaining agreement shall be deemed to be terminated as of the date of the certification or the anniversary date following the filing of the petition, whichever is later.

(3) An employee organization seeking certification as exclusive bargaining representative of a bargaining unit, or faculty members seeking decertification of their exclusive bargaining representative, must make a confidential showing to the commission of credible evidence demonstrating that at least thirty percent of the faculty in the bargaining unit are in support of the petition. The petition must indicate the name, address, and telephone number of any employee organization known to claim an interest in the bargaining unit.

(4) A petition filed by an employer must be supported by credible evidence demonstrating the good faith basis on which the employer claims the existence of a question concerning the representation of its faculty.

(5) Any employee organization which makes a confidential showing to the commission of credible evidence demonstrating that it has the support of at least ten percent of the faculty in the bargaining unit involved is entitled to intervene in proceedings under this section and to have its name listed as a choice on the ballot in an election conducted by the commission.

(6) The commission shall determine any question concerning representation by conducting a secret ballot election among the faculty members in the bargaining unit, except under the following circumstances:

(a) If only one employee organization is seeking certification as exclusive bargaining representative of a bargaining unit for which there is no incumbent exclusive bargaining representative, the commission may, upon the concurrence of the employer and the employee organization, determine the question concerning representation by conducting a cross-check comparing the employee organization's membership records or bargaining authorization cards against the employment records of the employer; or

(b) If the commission determines that a serious unfair labor practice has been committed which interfered with the election process and precludes the holding of a fair election, the commission may determine the question concerning representation by conducting a cross-check comparing the employee organization's membership records or bargaining authorization cards against the employment records of the employer.

(7) The representation election ballot must contain a choice for each employee organization qualifying under subsection (3) or (5) of this section, together with a choice for no representation. The representation election shall be determined by the majority of the valid ballots cast. If there are three or more choices on the ballot and none of the three or more choices receives a majority of the valid ballots cast, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two choices receiving the highest and second highest numbers of votes.

(8) The commission shall certify as the exclusive bargaining representative the employee organization that has been determined to represent a majority of faculty members in a bargaining unit.

**Sec.**  RCW 41.80.080 and 2002 c 354 s 309 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission shall determine all questions pertaining to representation and shall administer all elections and be responsible for the processing and adjudication of all disputes that arise as a consequence of elections. The commission shall adopt rules that provide for at least the following:

(a) Secret balloting;

(b) Consulting with employee organizations;

(c) Access to lists of employees, job classification, work locations, and home mailing addresses;

(d) Absentee voting;

(e) Procedures for the greatest possible participation in voting;

(f) Campaigning on the employer's property during working hours; and

(g) Election observers.

(2)(a) If an employee organization has been certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of the employees of a bargaining unit, the employee organization may act for and negotiate master collective bargaining agreements that will include within the coverage of the agreement all employees in the bargaining unit as provided in RCW 41.80.010(2)(a). However, if a master collective bargaining agreement is in effect for the exclusive bargaining representative, it shall apply to the bargaining unit for which the certification has been issued. Nothing in this section requires the parties to engage in new negotiations during the term of that agreement.

(b) This subsection (2) does not apply to exclusive bargaining representatives who represent employees of institutions of higher education.

(3) The certified exclusive bargaining representative shall be responsible for representing the interests of all the employees in the bargaining unit. This section shall not be construed to limit an exclusive representative's right to exercise its discretion to refuse to process grievances of employees that are unmeritorious.

(4) No question concerning representation may be raised if:

(a) Fewer than twelve months have elapsed since the last certification or election; or

(b) A valid collective bargaining agreement exists covering the unit, except for that period of no more than one hundred ((~~twenty~~))fifty calendar days nor less than ((~~ninety~~))sixty calendar days before the expiration of the contract.

**Sec.**  RCW 49.39.040 and 2010 c 6 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

If the commission elects to conduct an election to ascertain the exclusive bargaining representative, and upon the request of a prospective bargaining representative showing written proof of at least thirty percent representation of the symphony musicians within the unit, the commission shall hold an election by secret ballot to determine the issue. The ballot shall contain the name of the bargaining representative and of any other bargaining representative showing written proof of at least ten percent representation of the symphony musicians within the unit, together with a choice for any symphony musician to designate that he or she does not desire to be represented by any bargaining agent. Where more than one organization is on the ballot and neither of the three or more choices receives a majority vote of valid ballots cast, a run-off election shall be held. The run-off ballot shall contain the two choices which received the largest and second-largest number of votes. No question concerning representation may be raised within one year of a certification or attempted certification. Where there is a valid collective bargaining agreement in effect, no question of representation may be raised except during the period not more than ((~~ninety~~))one hundred fifty days nor less than sixty days prior to the expiration date of the agreement. Any agreement which contains a provision for automatic renewal or extension of the agreement shall not be a valid agreement; nor shall any agreement be valid if it provides for a term of existence for more than three years.

**Sec.**  RCW 47.64.135 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 16 s 27 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission shall determine all questions pertaining to representation and shall administer all elections and be responsible for the processing and adjudication of all disputes that arise as a consequence of elections. The commission shall adopt rules that provide for at least the following:

(a) Secret balloting;

(b) Consulting with employee organizations;

(c) Access to lists of employees, job classification, work locations, and home mailing addresses;

(d) Absentee voting;

(e) Procedures for the greatest possible participation in voting;

(f) Campaigning on the employer's property during working hours; and

(g) Election observers.

(2) If an employee organization has been certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of the employees of a bargaining unit, the employee organization may act for and negotiate master collective bargaining agreements that will include within the coverage of the agreement all employees in the bargaining unit.

(3) The certified exclusive bargaining representative is responsible for representing the interests of all the employees in the bargaining unit. This section shall not be construed to limit an exclusive representative's right to exercise its discretion to refuse to process grievances of employees that are unmeritorious.

(4) No question concerning representation may be raised if:

(a) Fewer than twelve months have elapsed since the last certification or election; or

(b) A valid collective bargaining agreement exists covering the unit, except for that period of no more than one hundred ((~~twenty~~))eighty calendar days and no less than ninety calendar days before the expiration of the contract.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.52 RCW to read as follows:

Academic employees may petition the commission for an election to change or reject their exclusive bargaining representative, subject to the following conditions:

(1) Petitioners must show written proof of at least thirty percent representation of the academic employees within the bargaining unit; and

(2) A question concerning representation may not be raised if:

(a) Fewer than twelve months have elapsed since the last certification or election; or

(b) A valid collective bargaining agreement exists covering the unit, except for that period of no more than one hundred fifty calendar days and no less than sixty calendar days before the expiration of the contract.

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