

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1913

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to department of corrections' employees employed at prisons and other custodial institutions.

Brief Description: Revising collective bargaining provisions for certain employees of the division of prisons of the department of corrections.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Hargrove, Grant and Neher.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 21, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1913 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 9 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Minority Report: *Without recommendation.* Signed by 2 members: Representatives Beck and Brekke.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: The state civil service law, Chapter 41.06 RCW, allows state classified employees to engage in collective bargaining on grievance procedures and personnel matters over which an agency can exercise discretion. It also requires the State Personnel Board to adopt rules concerning the determination of bargaining units, the certification and decertification of bargaining representatives, and payroll deductions for employee organization dues. The Higher Education Personnel Board adopts similar rules for employees of state higher education institutions.

The Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), generally offers its services to resolve labor disputes that may arise in any unit of local government, including district courts

within the State. PERC is responsible for applying the provisions of the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act and the Educational Employment Relations Act (K-12). In addition to local government employees, the act also applies to Washington State Patrol officers and to print craft employees of the University of Washington.

Some employees of the Department of Corrections would prefer to be under the jurisdiction of PERC and the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act for collective bargaining purposes.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Correctional officers, from the rank of lieutenant on down and non-managerial support staff, correctional employees, that are employed by the Division of Prisons of the Department of Corrections are included under certain provisions of the Public Employment Relations Act. The Department of Corrections is considered a public employer with regards to these employees for purposes of application of the Public Employment Relations Act.

Correctional employees are prohibited from striking and are not subject to interest arbitration. Wage and wage-related matters are not subject to mediation.

The employer and the bargaining representative for the correctional employees are required to begin negotiations at least five months before the submission of the budget to the legislative body of the employer. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement within 60 days, either party may declare an impasse and submit the dispute to the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) for mediation. PERC appoints a mediator who may meet with representatives of the parties either jointly or separately to resolve the dispute.

If no agreement is reached in the mediation process, either party, after providing written notice to the other party and to PERC, may request that matters in dispute be submitted to a fact-finder for recommendations. The executive director of PERC may also initiate fact-finding upon the recommendation of the mediator, if impasse still exists after a reasonable period of time has passed.

The parties must choose a fact-finder from a list submitted by the executive director of PERC. If the parties cannot agree on a fact-finder within seven days of being furnished the list, then upon the request of either party, PERC will appoint a fact-finder. The person who acted as mediator in the dispute cannot serve as the fact-finder.

The fact-finder must make inquiries and investigations, hold hearings, and take other necessary steps to resolve the dispute. The fact-finder may issue subpoenas. The fact-finder must issue written findings and recommendations within 30 days after the conclusion of the hearing. The findings and recommendations are advisory only.

The findings and recommendations of the fact-finder must be kept confidential for seven days after their issuance, to allow the parties a chance to study the recommendations. No later than seven days after the issuance of the recommendations, each party must notify the other party and PERC whether it accepts or rejects, in whole or in part, the recommendations. If the parties do not agree on the recommendations after seven days, the recommendations become public.

The services of the mediator are provided by PERC without cost to the parties. The fees and expenses of the fact-finder are paid equally by the parties in the dispute.

Correctional employees are not subject to State Personnel Board rules concerning the determination of bargaining units, certification and decertification of bargaining representatives, agreements between agencies and bargaining representatives on grievance procedures and collective negotiations over matters on which the agency has discretion, unfair labor practices, and payroll deductions for employee organization dues.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Technical amendments were made to include the Department of Corrections as a public employer for purposes of applying the Public Employment Relations Act, to allow for potential changes in job classifications without changing jurisdiction of PERC, and to exempt corrections employees from State Personnel Board rules pertaining to unfair labor practices.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 19, 1991.

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

Testimony For: City police officers are currently under the jurisdiction of PERC. The problems encountered by correctional officers are similar to problems encountered by city police officers. PERC has more expertise in handling the resolution of labor disputes.

Testimony Against: The current process under the State Personnel Board works well.

Witnesses: Becky Bogard and Carl Nagle, WSCEA (PRO); and Tom Rolfe and Jenny Adkins, Department of Corrections (CON).