
Transportation Committee

HB 2888

Brief Description: Requiring benefit parity for ferry galley workers.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooper, Simpson, G., Conway, Wood, Campbell, McDermott and Ormsby.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requiring Benefit Parity for Galley Workers

Hearing Date: 2/3/04

Staff: Jill Satran (786-7315).

Background:

Over the past several decades, the Washington State Ferries (WSF) has contracted with a private vendor to provide galley services on state ferries. In planning the most recent procurement for concessions, the WSF decided to take a new approach to vendor selection. Rather than issuing one contract for all concessions, the WSF identified seven business areas and issued requests for proposals (RFP) for each of these seven areas. The initial RFP for on-board food service did not require potential vendors to honor the terms of the labor contract between the previous vendor (Sodexo) and the galley workers' representative, Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU). The IBU filed a grievance with the Marine Employees' Commission (MEC) claiming that because such a provision had been included in previous contracts it should be considered a "past practice" upon which the union members could rely and therefore any change to the practice must be negotiated with the union. The MEC found in favor of the IBU and the WSF subsequently modified and reissued the RFP. The WSF has requested an administrative review of the MEC decision by the Thurston County Superior Court.

The WSF employees are represented by 13 bargaining units and are covered by nine separate contracts. Each of these contracts provide for health care benefits, although in general, the health care benefits provided to the WSF employees are equivalent to those provided to all state employees. The current employer monthly contribution per employee is \$505. Pension benefits are specifically excluded from negotiation in 47.64 RCW. These benefits are, by statute, equivalent to the pension benefits received by all state employees.

Summary of Bill:

The WSF is required to include in any contract with a private party to provide galley service that the galley workers shall receive health and pension benefits similar to those provided to Washington ferry system employees.

Health care benefits are not required to exceed those provided for the basic health care program and pension benefits are not required to exceed the terms, benefits and allowances provided to Washington ferry system employees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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