

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5251

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As Passed Senate, March 6, 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:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Clements, Hobbs, Parlette, Pridemore and Hatfield.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/25/07, 1/30/07 [DP].  
Passed Senate: 3/06/07, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Clements, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Holmquist and Murray.

**Staff:** Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

**Background:** Collective bargaining agreements entered into between a county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision of the state and an exclusive bargaining representative cannot extend for more than three years.

Last year, the Governor vetoed SB 6411 which extended the length of collective bargaining agreements from three years to six years for public employees who are covered by the Public Employee's Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). PECBA covers mainly city, county, and local government employees. It also includes several state employee groups, state troopers, higher education classified units, as well as home care workers and family childcare providers. Some of these groups have binding interest arbitration rights. In her veto message, the Governor expressed concerns that this dispute resolution mechanism could lead to settlements that violate the principle that the state cannot obligate future legislatures beyond the current biennium.

**Summary of Engrossed Bill:** The length of collective bargaining agreements is extended up to six years and limits the coverage to those agreements entered into between school districts, cities, counties, or municipal corporations and their respective employees.

A separate section is added that allows school districts to extend collective bargaining agreements to six years.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The issue that the Governor had with last year's bill has been taken care of in this bill. This bill removes the state employee groups that presented a problem: those with binding interest arbitration such as the Washington State Patrol. The option to go up to six years is an extremely important tool in negotiations. Negotiations can be a very lengthy process; one can negotiate for 18 months, sign the agreement, and under the current three year limit one would need to reopen the negotiations in six months. Having the six year option would be helpful and cost-effective. It also affects productivity and morale.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Peter Bogdanoff, Governor's Office; Owen Linch, Teamsters; Paul Pearce, Skamania County Commissioner; Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities; David Westerberg, Stationary Engineers AFL-CIO; Pat Thompson, County and City Employees.