

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5908

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection, February 24, 2009

Title: An act relating to interest arbitration for employees of juvenile court services administered under 13.20.060

Brief Description: Providing interest arbitration for employees of juvenile court services administered under RCW 13.20.060.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Roach and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 2/16/09, 2/24/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Honeyford, King and Kline.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: 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) administered by the Public Employment Relations Commission. For uniformed personnel, the PECBA recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. To resolve impasses over contract negotiations involving these uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires interest arbitration.

The employees who are listed as uniformed personnel include law enforcement officers in larger cities and counties; correctional security personnel employed in larger county jails; general authority peace officers employed by certain port districts; security forces at a nuclear power plant; firefighters; employees of fire departments who dispatch fire of emergency medical services; and publicly employed advanced life support technicians.

Summary of Bill: The definition of uniformed personnel is modified to include juvenile detention employees who are employees of a juvenile detention division in a county with a

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population of one million or more. Such juvenile detention employees are subject to interest arbitration under the PECBA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The juvenile detention guild officers need a way to resolve labor disputes. They are a law enforcement group in a department with binding arbitration available to other officers, but juvenile detention guild officers do not have it available for them. They cannot strike and do not have a way to resolve labor disputes. We need a neutral, level playing field. This would make it possible for both sides to be heard in a neutral unbiased manner. Juveniles in detention centers are not small and officers put themselves in harms way every time they go to work.

CON: King County as a matter of policy opposes the expansion of existing binding interest arbitration. This increases costs to everyone. The juvenile corrections officers do difficult work, and the bargaining process provides consistent and fair contracts. Only the adult corrections officers have binding interest arbitration in King County, the other bargaining groups do not have it.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Arne Walker, Clay Impala, Hector Garcia, Charles Adams, King County Juvenile Detention Guild.

CON: Michael West, King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention.