

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1987

As Passed House:
March 2, 2015

Title: An act relating to adding certain commissioned court marshals of county sheriff's offices to the definition of uniformed personnel for the purposes of public employees' collective bargaining.

Brief Description: Adding certain commissioned court marshals of county sheriff's offices to the definition of uniformed personnel for the purposes of public employees' collective bargaining.

Sponsors: Representatives Kochmar and Sells.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor: 2/16/15, 2/19/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/15, 66-31.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends interest arbitration under the Public Employee's Collective Bargaining Act to certain county court marshals.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Moeller and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives G. Hunt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCabe.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

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.

Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employee's Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). For certain uniformed personnel, the PECBA recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. For those employees, the PECBA requires binding interest arbitration if negotiations for a contract reach impasse and cannot be resolved through mediation. Under interest arbitration, an impartial third-party arbitrator makes decisions as to the terms of the contract.

Uniformed personnel include, among others: firefighters; employees of fire departments of public employers who dispatch exclusively either fire or emergency medical services, or both; law enforcement officers in larger cities and counties; general authority peace officers and firefighters employed by certain port districts; correctional employees who are employed in jails by counties with a population of 70,000 or more, and who are trained for and charged with responsibility for custody of inmates in the jail; security forces at a nuclear power plant; and publicly employed advanced life support technicians. Other public employees covered by interest arbitration include Washington State Patrol officers.

Summary of Bill:

The interest arbitration provisions of the PECBA for uniformed personnel are extended to county court marshals who are employed by, trained for, and commissioned by the county sheriff and charged with enforcing laws, protecting and maintaining security in all county-owned or contracted property, and performing any other duties assigned to them by the county sheriff or mandated by judicial order.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is written very narrowly to cover those commissioned marshals in King, Thurston, and Snohomish counties. There are about 35 marshals in King County. These officers protect the court house employees and the thousands of people who come through the court house every week.

(Opposed) County employees have made many concessions during the recession. Employee units with interest arbitration did not have to take as many dramatic cuts as other employee units. This creates more inequity between the units. Rather than expanding interest arbitration, the current statute should be revised.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Jared Karstetter, King County Sheriff Marshals' Guild; and Pat Thompson, Washington State Council of County and City Employees.

(Opposed) Josh Weiss, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.