

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1570

As Reported by House Committee On:
Labor & Workplace Standards

Title: An act relating to collective bargaining for certain employees who are enrolled in academic programs at public institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Concerning collective bargaining for certain employees who are enrolled in academic programs at public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Timmons, Fosse, Berry, Taylor, Parshley, Berg, Cortes, Stonier, Scott, Reed, Peterson, Ryu, Obras, Gregerson, Macri, Nance, Mena, Goodman, Reeves, Ramel, Shavers, Simmons, Doglio, Pollet and Salahuddin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 2/5/25, 2/14/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Grants student employees at Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College, who are not otherwise covered, the right to collectively bargain.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Bronoske, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

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

Staff: Benjamin McCarthy (786-7116).

Background:

Employees of institutions of higher education may be covered for purposes of collective bargaining under the Personnel System Reform Act (PSRA), the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA), or laws applicable to faculty and academic personnel. The PSRA applies to employees of institutions of higher education who are covered for purposes of civil service. Employees who are exempt from civil service, and therefore, from collective bargaining, include student employees. Student employees are employees of institutions of higher education who are enrolled in academic programs at those institutions.

The PECBA's collective bargaining framework covers academic employees at Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College. Academic employees are graduate teaching assistants, teaching assistants, graduate staff assistants, tutors, readers, graders, lab assistants, faculty assistants, research assistants, certain graduate research assistants, and others whose duties and responsibilities are substantially equivalent to the preceding classifications.

Summary of Bill:

The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) is made applicable to student employees who are enrolled in an academic or certificate program at a campus of Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, Western Washington University, or The Evergreen State College and who are not already eligible for collective bargaining, such as academic employees.

Student employees are considered enrolled during academic breaks if they are: (1) employed by the institution during the break; and (2) enrolled in an academic or certificate program the quarter or semester immediately before or after the break.

In addition to the general provisions of the PECBA, the following provisions apply to these student employees.

Bargaining Units.

The only appropriate bargaining unit is all student employees. A bargaining unit is not appropriate if it contains more than one institution of higher education.

Scope of Bargaining.

The scope of bargaining for these student employees excludes the:

- institution's ability to terminate an employee if the employee is not meeting academic requirements;

- amount of tuition or fees at the institution (except tuition and fee remission and waivers may be bargained);
- academic calendar of the institution; and
- number of students to be admitted to a particular class or class section.

Compensation.

The compensation provisions in a collective bargaining agreement must not exceed the amount or percentage established by the Legislature; however, the employer may provide additional compensation that exceeds the amount provided by the Legislature. If any compensation provision is affected by subsequent modification of an appropriations act, the parties must bargain for a replacement provision.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This will help students who are working in an operational capacity. These students are struggling with workload and scheduling challenges. This extends the right that other student employees already have. Having a two-tiered system implies that nonacademic labor is less valuable. These workers are already organizing; this just creates a framework for them. These workers have been struggling with getting paid on time and cannot bargain to address these issues. This will lead to better safety and communication and be better for the community.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There are concerns about how this bill will affect internships paid by the higher institution. These employees are paid both through legislative appropriation, and through tuition. Tuition is capped, and institutions are on a tight budget.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Joe Timmons, prime sponsor; Alexander Matheson, CWU Working Wildcats; Emily Myers, UAW; Gabriel Kelly, Western Academic Workers United; and Nathan Tippmann, TESC Student Lobbyist.

(Other) David Buri, Eastern Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.