

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5473

As Passed House:

April 14, 2025

Title: An act relating to law enforcement personnel grievance arbitration procedures.

Brief Description: Concerning law enforcement personnel grievance arbitration procedures.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Chapman and Holy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 3/18/25, 3/26/25 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/14/25, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires law enforcement officers to request grievance arbitration consistent with the procedures in their collective bargaining agreement.
- Removes the prohibition on expiring more than three arbitrators' terms in the same year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Berry, Chair; Fosse, Vice Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Ybarra, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, McEntire, Obras and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Benjamin McCarthy (786-7116).

Background:

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.

The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) provides for collective bargaining of wages, hours, and working conditions of employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions.

Law Enforcement Grievance Arbitration.

Under the PECBA, parties may agree to grievance arbitration in their collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Grievance arbitration is binding arbitration of disputes or disagreements regarding any disciplinary action, discharge, or termination decision. Typically, CBAs with grievance arbitration procedures will include provisions governing how the parties select arbitrators.

Under the PECBA, law enforcement personnel CBAs that contain grievance arbitration procedures must use an arbitrator selection process established by statute. The term "law enforcement personnel" includes individuals who enforce criminal laws in general, officers of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and corrections officers and community corrections officers of the Department of Corrections.

Arbitrator Selection Process.

The statutory procedures for grievance arbitrator selection process requires, among other things, the Public Employment Relations Commission to appoint a roster of 9 to 18 individuals to act as arbitrators. These arbitrators are appointed for three-year terms, and no more than three arbitrators' terms may expire in the same year.

Summary of Bill:

Law Enforcement Grievance Arbitration.

Law enforcement officers must request grievance arbitration in accordance with the procedures in their CBA.

Arbitrator Selection Process.

The prohibition on having more than three arbitrators' terms expire in the same year is removed.

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) These changes are agreed upon by all the stakeholders. This fixes procedural issues. It requires that a grievance be brought by one of the parties to the CBA. The parties to the CBA are the employer and the employee organization. This also removes the arbitrator term expiration limit which constrains the number of arbitrators to nine.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Steve Conway, prime sponsor; Candice Bock, Association of Washington Cities; and Mike Sellars, Public Employment Relations Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.