

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5040

As of January 24, 2025

Title: An act relating to expanding the definition of uniformed personnel to all law enforcement officers employed by a city, town, or county.

Brief Description: Expanding the definition of uniformed personnel to all law enforcement officers employed by a city, town, or county.

Sponsors: Senators Stanford, Holy, Saldaña, Lovick, Wilson, J., Conway, Hasegawa, Valdez and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/24/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the definition of uniformed personnel under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act by removing population thresholds for cities, towns, and counties that employ law enforcement officers.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

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). For certain uniformed personnel, 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 makes decisions regarding the unresolved terms of the contract. There are statutory procedures for parties to select arbitrators and factors the arbitration panel must consider when making its decision.

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.

Uniformed personnel include, among others, law enforcement officers employed by:

- cities or towns with a population of 2500 or more; and
- counties with a population of 10,000 or more.

Summary of Bill: The population thresholds for cities, towns, and counties that employ law enforcement officers are removed from the definition of uniform personnel, so that interest arbitration eligible uniformed personnel include law enforcement officers employed by any city, town, or county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill allows for consistency across all law enforcement personnel. The bill applies to about 120 employees in 47 cities and four counties. These officers do the same job as interest arbitration-eligible officers. Interest arbitration is not always about compensation, in the past it has been about safety equipment. Nothing requires the jurisdiction to go to interest arbitration. Any extra cost may incentivize resolving disputes faster.

CON: The bill affects the smallest counties with the least resources. They cannot afford arbitration. Arbitrators are not required to consider the financial feasibility of the county when deciding, which makes the impact of the bill harder on the small counties. Nothing has changed to justify passing the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Derek Stanford, Prime Sponsor; Jeff DeVere, WACOPS - Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs; Brenda Wiest, Teamsters 117.

CON: Paul Jewell, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.