

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2179

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to open public meetings of school boards regarding impasses in collective bargaining.

Brief Description: Requiring open public meetings of local school boards regarding impasses in collective bargaining.

Sponsors: Representatives Hickel and Johnson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/3/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Smith; Sterk; Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Quall and Veloria.

Staff: Pat Shelledy (786-7149).

Background: The Legislature has granted certificated employees of Washington's public schools the right to enter into collective bargaining agreements with regard to wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. Current statutes pertaining to collective bargaining include provisions regarding determination of bargaining units, identification of exclusive bargaining representatives, impasse options, and unfair practices.

Either the employer or the bargaining representative may declare an impasse in negotiations and may ask the Public Employees Relations Commission to appoint a mediator to help them reconcile their differences.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Immediately upon declaring an impasse, the parties must prepare a written notice itemizing the issues in dispute. The notice must be available at the school district administration offices. Within 10 days of either party declaring an impasse, the local school board must hold a public meeting at which the issues that are in dispute must be distributed and discussed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Added is the provision that requires the issues in dispute to be reduced to writing and made available at the administration offices as soon as the impasse is declared.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 26, 1997.

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

Testimony For: When a school district and the union reach an impasse, the issues in dispute should become public so the parents are informed. When the strike occurred in Federal Way, the parents did not know what issues were in dispute. The schools are supported with tax dollars and parents have a right to know.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hickel, prime sponsor.