

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6526

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 2, 2000

Title: An act relating to bargaining units for employees of institutions of higher education governed by chapter 41.56 RCW.

Brief Description: Excluding exempt positions from bargaining units of employees of institutions of higher education governed by chapter 41.56 RCW.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles and Sheahan; by request of University of Washington.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/31/2000, 2/2/2000 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Bauer, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Horn.

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: Under the state civil service system, classified employees of higher education institutions have limited bargaining rights. This means that bargaining units and institutions may only bargain over matters within an institution's legal control. Certain higher education positions are exempt from the civil service law in RCW 41.06.070(2); for example, administrative and personal assistants, principal assistants to executive heads of major administrative or academic divisions, and other managerial or professional employees.

In 1993, the Legislature granted higher education institutions and unions representing their employees the option to have full collective bargaining under the public employees collective bargaining law, Chapter 41.56 RCW. This means that bargaining units and institutions may bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC). The University of Washington and the Classified Staff Association, District 925 (CSA), have exercised that option for several bargaining units.

A dispute arose between the University of Washington and the CSA about whether the civil service exemptions applied to the bargaining units which transferred to the collective bargaining law. The Executive Director of PERC ruled that they did not.

Summary of Bill: The applicability of the civil service exemptions is reinstated in RCW 41.06.070 for bargaining units which have been transferred to the public employees collective bargaining law, Chapter 41.56 RCW.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2000.

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

Testimony For: This bill is the product of cooperative effort between management and labor. It will allow classified staff to reclassify into exempt professional positions like other classified staff. It will strengthen and clarify appeal rights.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kim Cook, Director, Classified Staff Association, Dist. 925 (pro); Dick Thompson, U.W. (pro); Karen Kavanagh, U.W. (pro).