

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6237

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions, February 4, 2002

Title: An act relating to restrictions on public passenger transportation system agreements for services by private entities.

Brief Description: Requiring that employee benefits for contract transportation employees be not less than those provided to public transportation employees.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Costa, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Gardner, Winsley, Franklin, Rasmussen, Patterson, Brown, Keiser, McAuliffe and Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 1/15/02, 2/4/02 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin, Gardner, Rasmussen and Regala.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Honeyford and West.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: Public transit agencies have been privatizing bus routes in response to fiscal pressures. Public transit system employees have labor rights that are covered by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) statute. PERC was created in 1975 and adjudicates collective bargaining and other disputes between public employers and their employees.

Summary of Bill: Public employers offering transportation services may not contract out for those services typically or historically provided by public transportation system employees if the wages and benefits provided by the contracting firm are less than those provided to public transportation system employees. Public employers must notify affected labor organizations prior to contracting out.

No limitation is placed on the duty to bargain with labor organizations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2002.

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

Testimony For: The transit systems in the state that contract out lower wages which harms the workers and their communities. This bill would provide a level playing field.

Testimony Against: This would hurt small private providers and some larger providers. It would increase costs and reduce services. Contracting allows transit systems to provide services in an efficient and effective manner.

Testified: PRO: Sherry Appleton, Fred Rose, Ron Thornton, ATULC; CON: Mary Jo Cady, Community Transit Assoc. NW; Dave OConnell, Mason Transit; John Sindzinski, Community Transit; Kathleen Collins, Spokane Transit.