

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1822

As of March 27, 2009

Title: An act relating to interest arbitration for certain general authority Washington peace officers.

Brief Description: Authorizing interest arbitration for certain general authority Washington peace officers.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Wood and Ormsby.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/11/09, 63-33.

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 3/26/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Counties, cities, and other political subdivisions and their employees bargain wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). For uniformed personnel, the PECBA recognizes the public policy against strikes as a means of settling labor disputes. To resolve impasses over contract negotiations involving uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding arbitration.

Uniformed personnel include law enforcement officers in larger cities and counties, and general authority peace officers employed by certain port districts. Other employees listed as uniformed personnel include firefighters in all cities and counties; firefighters employed by certain port districts; correctional employees in counties with a population of 70,000 or more; security forces at a nuclear power plant; and publicly-employed advanced life support technicians.

Counties, cities, and port districts are authorized to own and operate airports. Two or more municipalities, acting jointly, also may own and operate airports. There are currently six joint operating authority airports in Washington: Chehalis-Centralia Airport (city of Chehalis and Lewis County), Chelan Municipal Airport (city of Chelan and Port of Chelan), Pangborn Memorial Airport (Port of Chelan and Port of Douglas County), Spokane International Airport and Felts Field (city of Spokane and Spokane County), and Yakima Air Terminal Airport (city of Yakima and Yakima County).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The binding interest arbitration provisions of the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act are extended to general authority peace officers employed by joint operating authority airports.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Spokane Airport is the only airport with its own fully-commissioned police force. This job is not always safe and we work in the same dangerous environment that others work in. We do not meet the definition of uniformed personnel and we ask to be included in it. The Spokane Airport Fire Department does have interest arbitration, but the police does not. We do not have the right to strike, yet we do not have interest arbitration. We are concerned about what will happen in the next negotiation if we do not have interest arbitration. The last negotiation resulted in mediation, but no resolution was made and we discovered that we do not have interest arbitration. The Fire Department, which has interest arbitration, gets higher dependent medical coverage. It is unethical and illegal to strike and we are asking for another avenue to hear our cause. The Fire Department supports the Police Department getting interest arbitration rights. It is part of the negotiation process and is needed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Clay Creek, Spokane Airport Police; Tarina Rose-Watson, Spokane International Airport Police Department; Chris Wetherell, Spokane Airport Fire Department.