

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1348

As of February 28, 2014

Title: An act relating to modifying collective bargaining law related to providing additional compensation for academic employees at community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Modifying collective bargaining law related to providing additional compensation for academic employees at community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Hope, Stanford, Pollet, S. Hunt, Ryu, Seaquist, Goodman, Haigh, Wylie, Fitzgibbon, Santos, Pettigrew, Lytton, Blake, Moscoso, Sells, Orwall, Lias, Roberts, Carlyle, Sullivan, Upthegrove, Dunshee, Maxwell, Green, Riccelli, Ormsby, Springer, Appleton, McCoy, Van De Wege, Bergquist, Tarleton, Fey and Hudgins.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/13, 61-36; 1/24/14, 63-34.

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 4/01/13, 2/28/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Jessica Stevenson (786-7465)

Background: Several collective bargaining laws apply to public institutions of higher education. These laws generally provide that the governing boards and the exclusive bargaining representatives have a mutual obligation to bargain in good faith over wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

For academic employees at community and technical colleges, a contract may not include salary increases that exceed the amount or percentage established by the Legislature in the appropriations act and allocated by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Any provisions pertaining to salary increases in a contract are not binding upon future actions of the Legislature. There is no provision for additional compensation.

Summary of Bill: A board of trustees must award full and part-time academic employees step increases based on local collective bargaining agreements. Step increases may exceed compensation provided by the Legislature. The Legislature may allocate funding for step increases, which may be used in combination with turnover savings to award step increases.

Step increases are incremental salary increases based on a schedule. The schedule may be based on time, specific requirements, or a combination of the two.

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.

Turnover savings are the ongoing difference between the compensation level of an employee who left employment and the compensation level of the replacement employee, excluding temporary savings.

Rules adopted by SBCTC regarding permissible elements of compensation for faculty and other employees must be consistent with the legislation.

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: Employees bargain locally for wage increases, but they do not receive the money unless the state gives them money for it. The increments are already bargained for and earned. The employees of community and technical colleges should be treated the same as other employees that bargain for their wages. Many community college employees have not had step increases in six years. The costs of living have gone up, but the salaries do not keep up with the costs. Some teachers cannot buy homes because there is no reasonable certainty in their salaries. Some adjunct professors have lived in poverty for years. Community colleges have trouble retaining current faculty and recruiting new faculty positions because people of the salaries, and people would be at the same increment for many years. The bill allows local funds to be accessible for wages. The bill would level the playing field for adjunct professors by allowing them to bargain for wages. Adjuncts are the pool in which full time faculty are pulled.

CON: The proper way for these employees to have wage increases is with state money. Some people do not receive wage increases because it was not bargained for. The bill defeats the purposes of increments, and it would allow full time employees to double dip. Although all employees deserve to be compensated fairly, this bill is a mechanism of transferring the responsibility of funding from the state to the local levels. Some of the colleges will not be able to pay the increments. At the local level, they do not have the ability to raise revenue like the universities. The bill would adversely affect the budgets of community and technical colleges. Tuition is an uncertain revenue for the colleges. Community colleges would need to dismantle their budgets in order to pay the increments. Community colleges do not have levy funds. Students will be impacted by the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Karen Strickland, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) WA; Dawn Plourde, Pierce College, AFT; Annamary Fitzgerald, South Puget Sound Community College, AFT; Carla Nacarrato-Sinclair, Spokane Community College, WA Education Assn.; Kim Matthews, Clark College, WA Education Assn.; Shana Smith, Walla Walla Community College, WA Education Assn.; Larry Brown, Machinists Union.

CON: Jack Longmate, WA Part-time Faculty Assn.; Dan Altmayer, Trustees Assn. of Community and Technical Colleges; Jami Lund, Freedom Foundation.