

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5481

C 298 L 20
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning collective bargaining by fish and wildlife officers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Warnick, Sheldon, Short, Van De Wege, Honeyford, Wagoner, Fortunato and Holy).

Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Personnel System Reform Act. The Personnel System Reform Act (PSRA) provides for collective bargaining of wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with classified employees of state agencies and higher education institutions. Prior to 2019, the PSRA did not allow for interest arbitration. During the 2019 session, the Legislature authorized interest arbitration under the PSRA for both uniformed personnel and certain Department of Corrections employees. Currently, only police officers employed as members of a police force established by state universities, regional universities, or The Evergreen State College are considered uniformed personnel under the PSRA.

The provisions in the PSRA for interest arbitration for uniformed personnel are similar to the interest arbitration provisions for uniformed personnel under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act, including:

- required mediation before being certified to go to arbitration;
- procedures and timeframes for appointing an arbitration panel;
- procedures for an arbitration hearing; and
- factors to be considered by the arbitration panel, including a comparison of similar personnel of similar employers on the west coast.

Separate provisions exist in the PSRA for interest arbitration for Department of Corrections employees.

Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act. The Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) provides for collective bargaining of wages, hours, and working conditions with employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions. PECBA also applies to the state with respect to the officers of the Washington State Patrol (WSP). PECBA explicitly authorizes binding interest arbitration to resolve impasses over contract

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negotiations between uniformed personnel and their employers. Examples of employees covered by interest arbitration include firefighters in cities and counties, law enforcement officers in certain cities and counties, and WSP officers.

Summary: Fish and Wildlife Officers who rank below lieutenant are added to the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act and granted interest arbitration as an impasse procedure. If more than one exclusive bargaining unit represents fish and wildlife officers, they may choose to enter into separate bargaining or conduct bargaining as a coalition. If more than one bargaining unit enters into interest arbitration, they must do so as a coalition. Procedures are established for the timing of interest arbitration and the selection of arbitrators.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	87	10

Effective: June 11, 2020