

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5040

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As Passed Senate, February 25, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to expanding the definition of uniformed personnel to all law enforcement officers employed by a city, town, county, or governing body of a municipal airport operating under the provisions of chapter 14.08 RCW.

**Brief Description:** Expanding the definition of uniformed personnel to all law enforcement officers employed by a city, town, county, or governing body of a municipal airport operating under the provisions of chapter 14.08 RCW.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senators Stanford, Holy, Saldaña, Lovick, Wilson, J., Conway, Hasegawa, Valdez and Wellman).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor & Commerce: 1/24/25, 2/11/25 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

**Floor Activity:** Passed Senate: 2/25/25, 31-18.

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Expands the definition of interest arbitration-eligible uniformed personnel under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act by removing population thresholds for cities, towns, and counties that employ law enforcement officers.
- Adds law enforcement officers employed by the governing body of a municipal airport to the definition of uniformed personnel.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5040 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Saldaña, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Alvarado, Ramos and Stanford.

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

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Member; Braun and Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator MacEwen.

**Staff:** Jarrett Sacks (786-7448)

**Background:** Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). For certain uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding interest arbitration if negotiations for a contract reach impasse and cannot be resolved through mediation. Under interest arbitration, an impartial third-party makes decisions regarding the unresolved terms of the contract. There are statutory procedures for parties to select arbitrators and factors the arbitration panel must consider when making its decision.

Uniformed personnel include, among others, law enforcement officers employed by:

- cities or towns with a population of 2500 or more; and
- counties with a population of 10,000 or more.

**Summary of First Substitute Bill:** The population thresholds for cities, towns, and counties that employ law enforcement officers are removed from the definition of uniform personnel, so that interest arbitration eligible uniformed personnel include law enforcement officers employed by any city, town, or county. Law enforcement officers employed by the governing body of a municipal airport are added to the definition of uniformed personnel.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The bill allows for consistency across all law enforcement personnel. The bill applies to about 120 employees in 47 cities and four counties. These officers do the same job as interest arbitration-eligible officers. Interest arbitration is not always about compensation, in the past it has been about safety equipment. Nothing requires the jurisdiction to go to interest arbitration. Any extra cost may incentivize resolving disputes faster.

CON: The bill affects the smallest counties with the least resources. They cannot afford arbitration. Arbitrators are not required to consider the financial feasibility of the county

when deciding, which makes the impact of the bill harder on the small counties. Nothing has changed to justify passing the bill.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Derek Stanford, Prime Sponsor; Jeff DeVere, WACOPS - Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs; Brenda Wiest, Teamsters 117.

CON: Paul Jewell, Washington State Association of Counties.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.