

Chapter 44.90 RCW
LEGISLATIVE EMPLOYEE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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RCW 44.90.010 Intent. The legislature intends to create the office of state legislative labor relations for the purposes of considering and managing the unique issues raised by legislative collective bargaining. By examining issues set forth in RCW 44.90.030, the office will provide the legislature with a fuller understanding of how the legislature as an employer can best implement legislation for collective bargaining for legislative employees, which would be administered by the public employment relations commission. [2022 c 283 § 1.]

RCW 44.90.020 Definitions. (Effective May 1, 2024.) The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Commission" means the public employment relations commission.

(2) "Director" means the director of the office of state legislative labor relations.

(3) "Employee organization" means any organization, union, or association in which employees participate and that exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining with employers.

(4) "Exclusive bargaining representative" means any employee organization that has been certified under this chapter as the representative of the employees in an appropriate bargaining unit.

(5) "Legislative agencies" means the joint legislative audit and review committee, the statute law committee, the legislative ethics board, the legislative evaluation and accountability program committee, the office of the state actuary, the legislative service center, the office of legislative support services, the joint transportation committee, and the redistricting commission.

(6) "Office" means the office of state legislative labor relations. [2022 c 283 § 3.]

**RCW 44.90.030 Office of state legislative labor relations—
Director employment and duties—Reports.** (1) The office of state legislative labor relations is created to assist the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies in implementing and managing the process of collective bargaining for employees of the legislative branch of state government.

(2) (a) Subject to (b) of this subsection, the secretary of the senate and the chief clerk of the house of representatives shall employ a director of the office. The director serves at the pleasure of the secretary of the senate and the chief clerk of the house of representatives, who shall fix the director's salary.

(b) The secretary of the senate and the chief clerk of the house of representatives shall, before employing a director, consult with legislative employees, the senate facilities and operations committee, the house executive rules committee, and the human resources officers of the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies.

(c) The director serves as the executive and administrative head of the office and may employ additional employees to assist in carrying out the duties of the office. The duties of the office include, but are not limited to, conducting negotiations on behalf of the employer.

(d) The director shall contract with an external consultant for the purposes of gathering input from legislative employees, taking into consideration RCW 42.52.020 and rules of the house of representatives and the senate. The gathering of input must be in the form of, at a minimum, surveys.

(3) The director, in consultation with the secretary of the senate, the chief clerk of the house of representatives, and the administrative heads of legislative agencies shall:

(a) Examine issues related to collective bargaining for employees of the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies; and

(b) After consultation with the external consultant, develop best practices and options for the legislature to consider in implementing and administering collective bargaining for employees of the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies.

(4) (a) By December 1, 2022, the director shall submit a preliminary report to the appropriate committees of the legislature that provides a progress report on the director's considerations.

(b) By October 1, 2023, the director shall submit a final report to the appropriate committees of the legislature. At a minimum, the final report must address considerations on the following issues:

(i) Which employees of the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies for whom collective bargaining may be appropriate;

(ii) Mandatory, permissive, and prohibited subjects of bargaining;

(iii) Who would negotiate on behalf of the house of representatives, the senate, and legislative agencies, and which entity or entities would be considered the employer for purposes of bargaining;

(iv) Definitions for relevant terms;

(v) Common public employee collective bargaining agreement frameworks related to grievance procedures and processes for disciplinary actions;

(vi) Procedures related to the commission certifying exclusive bargaining representatives, determining bargaining units, adjudicating unfair labor practices, determining representation questions, and coalition bargaining;

(vii) The efficiency and feasibility of coalition bargaining;

(viii) Procedures for approving negotiated collective bargaining agreements;

(ix) Procedures for submitting requests for funding to the appropriate legislative committees if appropriations are necessary to implement provisions of the collective bargaining agreements; and

(x) Approaches taken by other state legislatures that have authorized collective bargaining for legislative employees.

(5) The report must include a summary of any statutory changes needed to address the considerations listed in subsection (4) of this section related to the collective bargaining process for legislative employees. [2022 c 283 § 2.]

RCW 44.90.040 Collective bargaining—Negotiations and agreement start dates. (Effective May 1, 2024.) Collective bargaining negotiations under this chapter shall commence no earlier than May 1, 2024. No collective bargaining agreement entered into under this chapter may take effect prior to July 1, 2025. [2022 c 283 § 4.]

RCW 44.90.050 Legislative employees—Collective bargaining—Exclusive bargaining representative—Certain payroll deductions prohibited. (Effective May 1, 2024.) (1) Except as may be specifically limited by this chapter, legislative employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist employee organizations, and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the purpose of collective bargaining free from interference, restraint, or coercion. Legislative employees shall also have the right to refrain from any or all such activities.

(2) Except as may be specifically limited by this chapter, the commission shall determine all questions pertaining to ascertaining exclusive bargaining representatives for legislative employees and collectively bargaining under this chapter. However, no employee organization shall be recognized or certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of a bargaining unit of employees of the legislative branch unless it receives the votes of a majority of employees in the petitioned for bargaining unit voting in a secret election by mail ballot administered by the commission. The commission's process must allow for an employee, group of employees, employee organizations, employer, or their agents to have the right to petition on any question concerning representation.

(3) The employer and the exclusive bargaining representative of a bargaining unit of legislative employees may not enter into a collective bargaining agreement that requires the employer to deduct, from the salary or wages of an employee, contributions for payments for political action committees sponsored by employee organizations with legislative employees as members. [2022 c 283 § 5.]

RCW 44.90.060 Strikes—When prohibited. (Effective May 1, 2024.) During a legislative session or committee assembly days, nothing

contained in this chapter permits or grants to any legislative employee the right to strike, participate in a work stoppage, or refuse to perform their official duties. [2022 c 283 § 6.]

RCW 44.90.070 Collective bargaining negotiations—Even-numbered years—Duration of agreement. (Effective May 1, 2024.) (1) Collective bargaining negotiations under this chapter must commence no later than July 1st of each even-numbered year after a bargaining unit has been certified.

(2) The duration of any collective bargaining agreement shall not exceed one fiscal biennium. [2022 c 283 § 7.]

RCW 44.90.080 Unfair labor practices. (Effective May 1, 2024.)

(1) It is an unfair labor practice for an employer in the legislative branch of state government:

(a) To interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed by this chapter;

(b) To dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any employee organization or contribute financial or other support to it: PROVIDED, That subject to rules adopted by the commission, an employer shall not be prohibited from permitting employees to confer with it or its representatives or agents during working hours without loss of time or pay;

(c) To encourage or discourage membership in any employee organization by discrimination in regard to hire, tenure of employment, or any term or condition of employment;

(d) To discharge or discriminate otherwise against an employee because that employee has filed charges or given testimony under this chapter;

(e) To refuse to bargain collectively with the exclusive bargaining representatives of its employees.

(2) It is an unfair labor practice for an employee organization:

(a) To restrain or coerce an employee in the exercise of the rights guaranteed by this chapter: PROVIDED, That this subsection shall not impair the right of an employee organization to prescribe its own rules with respect to the acquisition or retention of membership in the employee organization or to an employer in the selection of its representatives for the purpose of bargaining or the adjustment of grievances;

(b) To cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an employee in violation of subsection (1)(c) of this section;

(c) To discriminate against an employee because that employee has filed charges or given testimony under this chapter;

(d) To refuse to bargain collectively with an employer.

(3) The expressing of any views, arguments, or opinion, or the dissemination thereof to the public, whether in written, printed, graphic, or visual form, shall not constitute or be evidence of an unfair labor practice under this chapter, if such expression contains no threat of reprisal or force or promise of benefit. [2022 c 283 § 8.]

RCW 44.90.090 Items not subject to bargaining—Conflict between legislative policies and collective bargaining agreement. (Effective

May 1, 2024.) (1) The employer shall not bargain over rights of management which, in addition to all powers, duties, and rights established by constitutional provision or statute, shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) The functions and programs of the employer, the use of technology, and the structure of the organization, including the size and composition of standing committees;

(b) The employer's budget and the size of the employer's workforce, including determining the financial basis for layoffs;

(c) The right to direct and supervise employees;

(d) The hours of work during legislative session and the cutoff calendar for a legislative session; and

(e) Retirement plans and retirement benefits.

(2) Except for an applicable code of conduct policy adopted by a chamber of the legislature or a legislative agency, if a conflict exists between policies adopted by the legislature relating to wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment and a provision of a collective bargaining agreement negotiated under this chapter, the collective bargaining agreement shall prevail. A provision of a collective bargaining agreement that conflicts with a statute or an applicable term of a code of conduct policy adopted by a chamber of the legislature or a legislative agency is invalid and unenforceable. [2022 c 283 § 9.]

RCW 44.90.900 Effective date—2022 c 283 §§ 3-9. Sections 3 through 9 of this act take effect May 1, 2024. [2022 c 283 § 11.]