



TO: Members of the House Business & Labor Committee
FROM: Cindy Robert, City of Medford
RE: HB 2448 opposition
DATE: February 22, 2013

The City of Medford requests that you not support HB 2448, requiring that binding arbitration be used when negotiations on subjects not covered by a collective bargaining agreement reach an impasse.

If all local agencies are required to go to binding arbitration over all union contracts, there is no incentive for employees in currently strike permitted units to reach agreements. The result of such a change will be greater costs on local agencies.

The problem is that no one has yet come up with a reasonable definition of what is in the "interest and welfare of the public." Therefore arbitrators rely on other statutory factors for decision-making. Lack of definition makes application impossible for some bargaining.

Currently, the binding arbitration process is reserved for public safety and transit bargaining units, as strikes by those units would be untenable. This makes sense in that the market comparability of a police officer in Springfield or Bend versus Medford, the statutory factors may work because the jobs are similar in cities of comparable size. The same does not apply when comparing the market for a public works laborer or a parks worker because we don't compete with candidates for those jobs with cities our size, but with smaller ones and the private sector.

Using the statutory factors required by current state law for non-public safety unions make no sense. It is wiser and fairer for all involved if the legislature let's local elected officials determine how best to provide services to the public and pay for them.

We urge you to leave the law as it is.