



TO: House Business & Labor Committee
FROM: City of Medford
Cindy Robert 503-260-3431
RE: Opposition to HB 2544
DATE: February 13, 2015

This bill extends binding arbitration to employee groups that have a right to strike for any mandatory subjects of bargaining that arise during the life of a collective bargaining agreement. On behalf of the City of Medford, I ask you to consider these concerns that they have raised:

Current statute creates an expedited bargaining process of 90 calendar days. If no agreement is reached in this time period, the employer can implement the proposed changes. This only applies to items not covered by the current agreement. Allowing for binding arbitration if an agreement cannot be reached will create the following problems:

- The process will no longer be expedited and will infringe on a public employer's ability to effectively and efficiently meet unforeseen needs or environment changes during the term of a collective bargaining agreement.
- The process will be extended to at least 180 days (6 months) or more depending on the availability of mediation and arbitrators.
- This expanded right to arbitration is an additional unfunded mandate on public employers and can cost thousands of dollars for legal expense and the expense of an arbitrator.

The City of Medford believes that the current statute provides enough of a burden on the parties that only important issues will be brought to the table. Even if an employer can unilaterally implement after 90 days, the process consumes enough time and energy that it is self-policing...meaning, an employer is generally only going to bring something to the table that is based on operational necessity.

We urge you to remember that we too serve the public and want to do what is right and fair for all.