

April 27, 2015

Senate Committee on Workforce
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301



Re: Opposition to HB 2544

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BEND, OR 97701
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Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The City of Bend opposes HB 2544 because it forces mandatory arbitration for employee groups who are not strike-prohibited, thereby fundamentally changing the approach to public sector labor negotiations in this state. For years, the state has had a system in which mandatory arbitration is required for strike-prohibited employee groups to resolve impasses but is not otherwise required. This legislation would change the approach by expanding mandatory arbitration to strike-permitted groups and would also make it easier to reach mandatory arbitration without the need for a true bargaining impasse. It makes no sense to allow mid-term arbitration for employee groups whose rights, in the case of a bargaining impasse, include the right to strike.

JIM CLINTON
Mayor

SALLY RUSSELL
Mayor Pro Tem

NATHAN BODDIE
City Councilor

VICTOR CHUDOWSKY
City Councilor

CASEY ROATS
City Councilor

DOUG KNIGHT
City Councilor

BARB CAMPBELL
City Councilor

This bill would significantly limit cities from resolving unforeseen mid-term matters without going through a costly and slow process. It would also increase the burden on the already overworked ERB and arbiters.

The risk of mandatory arbitration will cause cities to act very conservatively and not take any action that might trigger mandatory arbitration. Examples of actions that may be affected include hiring of new employees and provision of additional benefits. Arbitration can cost a city from \$10,000 to \$30,000, which is a waste of resources when the issue could be resolved at the next full negotiation.

ERIC KING
City Manager

There is no pressing need to take action. The system is not broken, and employees' rights are protected by existing laws.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric King", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Eric King
City Manager