



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** LP2020-004, **Version:** 2

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Clerk 12/08/2020

Implementation of the labor polices workgroup and amending county labor policies.

STATEMENT OF FACTS: (if needed)

1. The county's workforce is its greatest asset; it takes highly trained and dedicated people to deliver King County's vital public services.
2. Strong labor relations allow the county to reliably provide a very high level of service to the public.
3. The county as the employer and organized labor as representatives of employees have worked together cooperatively for many years with a shared mission to serve the residents of King County with essential public services and to improve the quality of life for our residents.
4. At the county's annual labor summit on June 26, 2019, the Council passed Motion 15428. This Motion created the Labor Policies Workgroup, which was tasked with recommending updates and changes to the county's labor policies.
4. This workgroup was comprised of representatives of Labor, the Council and the Executive, met numerous times in 2019 and 2020 and developed recommendations to update the county's Labor Policies.

FOR THE FOREGOING REASONS THE FOLLOWING NEW LABOR POLICES ARE ADOPTED  
AND EXITING LABOR POLICES ARE AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. NEW POLICY. There is hereby added to the labor policies a new section LAB 1-001 to

read as follows:

**Guiding Principles:** The guiding principles underlying King County's relationship with its employees shall be based upon the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assertion, in his speech to striking Memphis sanitation workers on March 18, 1968, that "All labor has dignity" and "**that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity, and it has worth.**" King County's Labor Policies and contracts will reflect the values of dignity and worth as guiding principles.

**SECTION 2. NEW POLICY.** There is hereby added to the Labor Policies a new section LAB 1-002 to read as follows:

**Purpose:** Labor policies establish the policies for matters related to the compensation and working conditions of King County employees. Nothing in the policies changes the legally mandated bargaining obligations of the county and organized labor with respect to the subjects contained in the policies. Further, existing collective bargaining agreements between the parties supersede any changes in labor policies made after the effective date of the agreements.

**SECTION 3. NEW POLICY.** There is hereby added to the Labor Policies a new section LAB 1-003 to read as follows:

**Model Employer:** King County is committed to being an employer of choice. The county aims to provide a competitive total compensation package, including high-value and holistic benefits that support and meet the needs of a diverse workforce, and ensure a supportive working environment and access to growth and development opportunities.

**SECTION 4. NEW POLICY.** There is hereby added to the Labor Policies a new section LAB 1-004 to read as follows:

**Union and Guild Organizing:** The county recognizes and supports a union or guild's right to represent and organize employees. As a matter of practice and principle, the county shall expeditiously respond to representation inquiries. For purposes of labor policies, the term "organized labor" shall mean the employees of

King County who are represented by labor unions and guilds as well as the representatives of those employees.

SECTION 5. NEW POLICY. There is hereby **added to the Labor Policies a new section LAB -1-005** to read as follows:

**Safety:** King County is committed to promoting a respectful, safe and healthy workplace for its employees, and shall comply with all applicable health and safety regulations. In addition to being subject to the standards developed under the law, the county shall work to assist and encourage individual departments, divisions, offices and other agencies in their efforts to provide respectful, safe and healthy working conditions and work to standardize procedures, processes and communications regarding safety issues.

SECTION 6. Lab 1-020 is hereby amended to read as follows: (~~(**Diversity in the County's work force:** It shall be the policy of King County to acknowledge the worth of cultural and ethnic diversity in building and maintaining an effective work force.~~)) **Equity and Social Justice:** King County values diversity, equity, well-being and belonging in our workplace and workforce. King County further acknowledges that the community is best served by a culturally, ethnically and racially diverse workforce that brings varied perspectives, beliefs and values to public service. For these reasons, the county shall pursue labor agreements that support the hiring and retention of such a diverse workforce, including, taking into account how employment decisions may impact the county's equity and social justice goals.

SECTION 7. LP 2010-031, Section I.14, and LAB 1-030 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Project Labor Agreements**(~~(. The county shall explore the use of a project labor agreement (PLA) for county projects when appropriate. PLAs may be considered for projects that have a complex scope, a multi-year schedule, a budget of significant size, and/or a clear public benefit. When a PLA is implemented, the general contractor and relevant trade unions shall execute the PLA in a form acceptable to the county.~~)) **and** **Community Workforce Agreements:** The county supports project labor agreements ("PLAs"), which are intended to ensure the peaceful settlement of labor disputes and grievances so that large-scale public works

projects are completed without delays due to strikes or lockouts. A PLA that includes the additional provision for "priority hiring" is known as a community workforce agreement ("CWA"). The Priority Hire program provides local construction workers living in economically disadvantaged areas of the county with access to participate in King County construction projects. The county intends to use CWAs in county-funded public works projects meeting certain criteria established by the executive, including, but not limited to, having construction costs estimated at or above a specific threshold. For large-scale federally funded projects, the county intends to use either a CWA or a PLA depending on what is allowed by the respective federal agencies.

SECTION 8. LP 2010-031, Section I.15, and LAB 1-040 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Employee Performance ((Evaluations)) and Accountability:** It shall be the policy of King County ((that)) to promote ongoing employee development and accountability through effective communication of job requirements and workplace expectations, coaching and employee feedback. This includes employee performance evaluations that shall be conducted at least annually as part of a systematic and equitable employee performance management system. These evaluations shall be maintained in employee personnel files. Employee performance evaluations shall be an element in a comprehensive employee performance management system ((that shall include employee development and)). Subject to the collective bargaining process, performance evaluations can be considered in determining incentive compensation, promotions and demotions ((if agreed to by the union through the collective bargaining process)).

SECTION 9. LP 2010-031, Section I.16, and LAB 1-050 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**((Continuous Improvement)) Best-Run Government:** It shall be the policy of King County to promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and fiscal responsibility. Our interest is to partner with the county's workforce to identify opportunities to improve ((productivity and identify)) the way ((to contain the)) the county does business, including building capacity and addressing cost growth ((of future costs. We will seek employee collaboration on cost reduction, service improvement and problem solving)).

NEW SECTION. SECTION 10. There is hereby **added to the Labor Policies a new section LAB 1-**

060 to read as follows:

**Standardization and Impacts to Business Systems:** To further the county's values of equity and fiscal responsibility, it shall be the policy of King County to standardize personnel rules, policies and practices across the county to the extent possible. The county will partner with employees and their bargaining representative to identify opportunities for standardization.

SECTION 12. LP 2010-031, Section I.2, and LAB 3-010 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Mediation and Grievance Settlement Pilot:** The county encourages (~~(, but does not mandate,)~~) alternative dispute resolution, such as voluntary mediation, as preferable to an adversarial process or litigation for resolving conflicts and grievance. Additionally, upon request by either organized labor or management, the parties will mediate a matter, preferably through King County Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution (recognizing the ADR office is not appropriate for all matters), subject to the relevant provisions of the governing collective bargaining agreement.

For two years following adoption of these policies, any grievance brought by organized labor regarding a compensation item will undergo a cost/benefit analysis to determine the most resource-efficient resolution and absent a legal impediment, the most resource-efficient resolution will be given consideration in the county's efforts to settle grievances in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The term "resource" will be construed broadly to include not only direct financial expenditures, including but not limited to compensation demand of the grievant, costs associated with arbitration, including the arbiter, consultants and arbitration witnesses, and the total cost-estimate for all county employee staff hours expended during, the grievance process, including but not limited to those of the office of labor relations, the prosecuting attorney's office and the affected department, but also the potential future cost to the county of establishing a precedent that encourages future grievances on the same or related topics.

The parties shall assess the efficacy of the pilot after two years based on whether the additional work of

doing an assessment added value to the grievance settlement process from the perspective of organized labor and management. If all parties (that is, the executive, council and organized labor) agree that the pilot added value, the parties shall consider making it permanent.

SECTION 13. LP 2010-031, Section I.6, as amended, and LAB 3-020 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Binding Interest Arbitration:** It shall be the policy of King County that binding interest arbitration only be extended to those represented groups of county employees who are eligible for interest arbitration under state law(~~(, except as otherwise provided in county labor policy.~~

~~On a trial basis and subject to the following conditions, the county council supports allowing the county's bargaining agents to negotiate binding interest arbitration for court protection officers (operationally referred to as "King County Sheriff Marshals"). It is understood that such a concession by the county would be made in exchange for a corresponding concession or concessions by the court protection officers in collective bargaining. Any interest arbitration provision in a collective bargaining agreement with court protection officers should, by its explicit terms, provide that neither the issue of whether to include an interest arbitration provision in a subsequent collective bargaining agreement nor the terms of any such provision are subject to interest arbitration. The county's bargaining agents may, in their discretion, negotiate the inclusion in any interest arbitration provision of terms such as: (1) whether interest arbitration must be preceded by mediation; (2) the process for selecting an arbitrator; (3) the scope of the issues to be arbitrated; (4) the form of interest arbitration (for example, conventional vs. "final offer"); (5) the criteria to be used by the arbitrator in reaching a decision, such as the designation of comparable jurisdictions; and (6) the procedures to be followed in arbitration. This paragraph is effective only until one interest arbitration with court protection officers has been conducted, whereupon the council shall review the facts and circumstances of the arbitration. The county's bargaining agents should attempt to negotiate a requirement that the arbitrator consider the county's obligation to protect and advance the interests and welfare of county residents and the financial ability of the county to do~~

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SECTION 14. LP 2010-031, Section I.12, and LAB 4-010 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Timeliness of Organized Labor Contract Negotiations:** It shall be the goal of King County to complete negotiations with its collective bargaining units prior to the expiration of any agreement (~~((in effect subject to the concurrence of the Union as party to the agreement and individual circumstances pertaining to any given contract))~~), recognizing that the implementation of changes to benefits and/or wages requires significant lead time, and in an effort to avoid retroactive payments, and the associated costs and administrative burden. In order to implement this policy, and if both parties agree, the Executive shall work with the county's collective bargaining units to make whatever scheduling adjustments may be necessary to allow sufficient time for negotiations to commence, be concluded and for mutual approval to be secured.

SECTION 15. LP 2010-031, Section I.2, and LAB 3-010 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Compensation:**

A. Changes in wages shall be fiscally responsible, fair, and reasonable with respect to total compensation.

B. When determining whether a change in wages is warranted, and when negotiating the amount of any such change, the executive shall consider the following factors: i. economic conditions, including inflation or deflation, in the region,

ii. impacts to services based on revenue and cost forecast((s)) for the county,

iii. comparable market compensation, (~~and~~)

iv. the status of county reserves,

v. the wage gap between similarly employed employees, taking into account disparities that exist for classifications disproportionately held by employees of underrepresented and underserved races, genders or other protected classes consistent with the law, and

vi. external wage disparities that exist for occupations in the local market historically held by underrepresented and underserved communities.

C. If a cost of living adjustment is determined to be warranted, it shall be linked to a specific Bureau of Labor Statistics Index, such as up to 90 percent of the calculated average of the 12 monthly percentage changes of the All-Cities CPI-W between July of the previous year and June of the current year.

D. The executive shall bargain in good faith with the goal of including provisions in collective bargaining agreements that allow bargaining to be reopened on total compensation and other contract terms when significant shifts in economic and fiscal conditions occur during the term of the proposed agreement, as defined by mutually-agreed upon objective measures, such as a swing in the King County unemployment rate of more than 2 percentage points compared with the previous year or a deviation of more than 7 percent, net of inflation from the previous year in actual sales tax revenues collected.

SECTION 16. LP 2010-031, Section I.18, as amended, and LAB 5-020 are hereby amended to read as follows:

**Overtime:** Subject to the county's collective bargaining obligations and applicable law, the county executive shall pursue as a goal in collective bargaining an agreement that is supportive of the following:

A. Overtime should be required or permitted only when necessary—for example, for continuity or cost-effectiveness of operations—and not as a substitute for efficient scheduling or adequate staffing.

B. In assigning and administering overtime, managers should continue to give appropriate consideration to the health and safety of employees and the public, the quality and productivity of services, and the need to maintain an appropriate staffing level for operations.

C. To reduce unemployment, the county should hire or recall employees in preference to paying current employees to work overtime if doing so is cost-effective, taking into consideration all applicable costs, such as training, benefits and equipment.

D. Job classifications that are not required by law to be compensated on an hourly basis should be

compensated on a salaried basis whenever possible.

E. Vacations, compensatory time off and other forms of scheduled leave should be coordinated to minimize the use of overtime to cover for employees who are on leave.

F. Administering overtime pay in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.