

## Legislation Text

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A MOTION supporting public employees and honoring their work by declaring the fourth Monday in March of each year as Public Employee Appreciation Day in King County.

WHEREAS, public employees at all levels of government provide essential public services, without which societal life as enjoyed by the residents of King County would be greatly diminished, and

WHEREAS, public employees include doctors, nurses, firefighters, teachers, police, social workers, laborers and many other professions, and

WHEREAS, public employees provide services that are generally not profitable for the private sector to provide, and public employees provide critical services such as health care to individuals who would otherwise not be able to afford them, and

WHEREAS, public employees are often members of unions and Washington state has recognized the importance and value of laws that ensure workplace safety, the right to bargain collectively and the voters of Washington approved the most progressive minimum wage law in the nation, and

WHEREAS, public employees are a significant part of the middle class and an essential component of a strong, democratic society, and

WHEREAS, King County has more than thirteen thousand employees, many of whom are union members, who are dedicated to providing excellent customer service and who are highly skilled in their trades or professions, and

WHEREAS, public employees throughout the nation and in King County have lost their jobs and have voluntarily accepted reduced wages as a way to maintain the level of public services during this "Great

Recession," and

WHEREAS, around the country and in King County, labor leaders and their union members have stepped forward to voluntarily participate in wage and benefit reductions, furloughs and other cost-saving measures to preserve the jobs of their fellow employees and assist in managing the impacts of the recession on governmental budgets, and have developed creative ways to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, and

WHEREAS, King County employees in particular stepped forward in 2009 and volunteered for unpaid furlough days, in 2010 county employees did a mix of unpaid furlough days and forewent cost-of-living adjustments and in 2011 employees again volunteered to forego cost-of-living adjustments in order to preserve the jobs of their fellow employees and to preserve service levels for the public, yet King County still had to eliminate over six hundred thirty-five jobs cumulatively during 2010 and 2011, and

WHEREAS, all working men and women deserve honor and respect for the work they do, including public employees, and King County will continue to partner with its employees so they are empowered to perform their jobs efficiently and creatively with high-quality customer service;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council reaffirms its support for public employees and the services they provide and the right of public employees to organize and to bargain collectively. The council opposes any attempt to restrict or eliminate collective bargaining in the state of Washington. Collective bargaining has evolved historically as an important organizational tool and provides checks and balances for labor and management in the workplace.

B. The council is committed to treating all of its employees fairly and with respect and to bargaining in good faith with its represented public employees.

C. The council declares Monday, March 28, 2011, as Public Employee Appreciation Day, and thereafter, every fourth Monday in March shall be Public Employee Appreciation Day.