
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 209

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATUS OF PROBATE COURT SYSTEM EMPLOYEES.

SUMMARY

This bill provides collective bargaining (i.e., unionizing) rights to probate court employees, including the regional children's probate court employees. Current law does not permit them to collectively bargain, and they serve at the pleasure of the probate court judges.

Beginning October 1, 2022, the bill deems these employees state employees only for collective bargaining purposes under the state employee collective bargaining law. Under current law, probate employees are deemed not to be state employees for any purpose.

The bill makes a conforming change eliminating a provision that specifies that these employees serve at the pleasure of the probate court judge under whom they are employed (i.e., employed at will). However, it is unclear whether they remain at will employees after the bill's effective date if they (1) choose not to unionize or (2) do not yet have a collective bargaining agreement in place.

Under the bill, starting October 1, 2022, the probate court is considered an employer for collective bargaining purposes thus requiring the probate court administrator, or her designee, to negotiate with employees on the court's behalf.

The state employee collective bargaining law establishes provisions for (1) selecting an exclusive bargaining agent for collective bargaining, (2) holding an election on whether to form a union, (3) mandatory negotiations, (4) mandatory binding arbitration when a negotiation impasse is declared, and (5) other steps and mechanisms related to bargaining and arbitration (CGS 5-270 to -280).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 9 Nay 4 (03/10/2022)