

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas  
2 84th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2003  
4

As Engrossed: H3/6/03  
**A Bill**

HOUSE BILL 1139

5 By: Representative J. Elliott  
6  
7

8 **For An Act To Be Entitled**

9 THE STATE EMPLOYEE LIMITED PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
10 RELATIONS ACT.  
11

12 **Subtitle**

13 THE STATE EMPLOYEE LIMITED PUBLIC  
14 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT.  
15  
16

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
18

19 SECTION 1. Public policy.

20 The General Assembly declares that it is the public policy of the state  
21 to promote harmonious and cooperative relationships between government and  
22 its employees by permitting state employees to have a voice in determining  
23 their conditions of work through collective bargaining; to protect the  
24 citizens of this state by assuring effective and orderly operations of  
25 government in providing for their health, safety, and welfare; and to protect  
26 the rights of state employees to join or refuse to join, and to participate  
27 in or refuse to participate in employee organizations of their own choosing.  
28

29 SECTION 2. Title.

30 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "State Employee Limited  
31 Public Employment Relations Act".  
32

33 SECTION 3. Definitions.

34 As used in this act, unless the context otherwise requires:

35 (1) "Arbitration" means the procedure whereby the parties involved in  
36 a dispute under a collective bargaining agreement submit their differences to



1 a third party for a final and binding decision or as provided in this act;

2 (2) "Board" means the State Employment Relations Board established  
3 under this act;

4 (3) "Collective bargaining" means the performance of the mutual  
5 obligations of the employer and an exclusive representative as set forth in  
6 this act and includes the obligation to meet at reasonable times, to confer  
7 and negotiate in good faith with the aim of reaching agreement on wages,  
8 benefits and other terms and conditions of employment, to execute a written  
9 document setting forth the final terms of agreement, and to comply with such  
10 terms of the collective bargaining agreement; provided, however, that in the  
11 course of negotiations neither party shall be compelled to agree to any  
12 specific proposal or be required to make a concession thereon;

13 (4) "Confidential employee" means an employee who works in the  
14 personnel offices of an employer or who has access to information subject to  
15 use by the employer in negotiating or who works in a close continuing working  
16 relationship with public officers or representatives associated with  
17 negotiating on behalf of the employer;

18 (5) "Employee organization" means any lawful association,  
19 organization, federation, council or labor union that exists for the purpose  
20 of dealing with employers on behalf of employees concerning hours or terms  
21 and other conditions of employment;

22 (6) "Employer" means each executive branch agency of the State of  
23 Arkansas;

24 (7) "Exclusive representative" means the representative designated or  
25 selected in accordance with this act for purposes of collective bargaining by  
26 employees in a unit appropriate for those purposes which has the sole right  
27 to represent all employees within the unit;

28 (8) "Impasse" means the failure of an employer and an employee  
29 organization to reach agreement in the course of negotiations;

30 (9) "Managerial representative" means an individual whose principal  
31 duties entail major administrative or management responsibilities on behalf  
32 of the employer, including responsibility for direction of a major division  
33 or function of the employer, for developing, implementing and evaluating  
34 goals and objectives to meet the responsibilities of the employer, for  
35 formulating policy on behalf of the state or governing board, or for  
36 overseeing and administering collective bargaining agreements or major

1 personnel decisions;

2 (10) "Professional employee" means an employee:

3 (A) Who is engaged in work that:

4 (i) Is predominately intellectual and varied in character  
5 as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work;

6 (ii) Involves the consistent exercise of discretion and  
7 judgment in its performance; and

8 (iii) Requires knowledge of an advanced type in a field of  
9 science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized  
10 intellectual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning or a  
11 hospital, as distinguished from a general academic education or from an  
12 apprenticeship or from training in the performance of routine mental, manual,  
13 or physical processes; or

14 (B) An employee who:

15 (i) Has completed the courses of specialized intellectual  
16 instruction and study described above; and

17 (ii) Is performing related work under the supervision of a  
18 professional person to qualify the employee to become engaged in work  
19 described in subdivision (10)(A); and

20 (11) "State employee" means any person employed by the State of  
21 Arkansas, including state supported institutions of higher education, except  
22 persons excluded from coverage under Section 4.

23  
24 SECTION 4. Coverage and exclusions.

25 This act applies to all state employees except the following:

26 (1) Elected officials and persons appointed to fill vacancies in  
27 elective offices, and members of any board or commission;

28 (2) Managerial representatives;

29 (3) Confidential employees;

30 (4) Students working part-time for twenty (20) hours or less per week  
31 unless they are:

32 (A) Graduate or postgraduate students in preparation for a  
33 profession and are engaged in academically related employment as a teaching,  
34 research, or service assistant; or

35 (B) Medical interns and residents employed at a public hospital;

36 (5) Commissioned and enlisted personnel of the Arkansas National

1 Guard;

2 (6) Judicial officers, and employees of the judicial branch;

3 (7) Patients and inmates employed, sentenced or committed to any state  
4 or local institution;

5 (8) Legislative branch employees; and

6 (9) Public school employees.

7  
8 SECTION 5. Public Employment Relations Board.

9 (a) There is created within the executive branch a board to be known  
10 as the "Public Employment Relations Board".

11 (1) The board shall be composed of three (3) members appointed  
12 by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. One (1) member shall  
13 by qualifications be representative of the employees. One (1) member shall  
14 by qualifications be representative of the employers. One (1) member shall  
15 by qualifications be considered a neutral in labor-management issues and must  
16 have five (5) years' experience as a mediator or an arbitrator of labor  
17 management disputes. In selecting the members of the board, consideration  
18 shall be given to their knowledge, ability, and experience in the field of  
19 labor-management relations. The member holding the neutral position shall  
20 serve as the chairperson of the board.

21 (2) The initial the employees' representative shall be appointed  
22 for a two-year term of office, the initial employer representative shall be  
23 appointed for a four-year term of office, and the initial neutral member  
24 shall be appointed for a six-year term of office. Upon the expiration of any  
25 term of office, the successor shall be appointed for a six-year term of  
26 office.

27 (3) No member of the board shall engage in any political  
28 activity while holding office.

29 (4) Any vacancy occurring shall be filled in the same manner as  
30 regular appointments are made and the appointee shall serve the remainder of  
31 the unexpired term of office.

32 (5) The board may, to the extent funds are available, employ  
33 such persons as are necessary for the performance of its functions.

34 (6) To the extent funds are available therefor, members of the  
35 board shall receive a stipend as provided in Arkansas Code 25-16-904 and  
36 expense reimbursement as provided in Arkansas Code 25-16-902.

1           (b) In addition to any authority or responsibilities provided  
2 elsewhere in this act, the board may:

3                   (1) Administer and enforce the provisions of this act;

4                   (2) Establish minimum qualifications for arbitrators and  
5 mediators;

6                   (3) Establish procedures for appointing, maintaining, and  
7 removing arbitrators and mediators;

8                   (4) Establish compensation rates for arbitrators and mediators;

9                   (5) Take such other action as it considers necessary to carry  
10 out properly its functions and powers; and

11                   (6) Adopt regulations in accordance with the Arkansas  
12 Administrative Procedure Act, beginning at Arkansas Code 25-15-201, as it may  
13 deem necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

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15           SECTION 6. State employee rights.

16                   (a) State employees shall have the right, free from interference,  
17 restraint or coercion, to:

18                           (1) Organize, form, join, assist and participate in activities of  
19 employee organizations;

20                           (2) Engage in collective bargaining regarding terms and  
21 conditions of employment through exclusive representatives of their own  
22 choosing;

23                           (3) Engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective  
24 bargaining or other mutual aid or protection; and

25                           (4) Refrain from any or all of the activities described in this  
26 subsection (a).

27                   (b) This act in no way authorizes or provides any right to employees  
28 to strike or to otherwise participate in any work stoppage or interruption.

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30           SECTION 7. Prohibited practices.

31                   (a) An employer and its representatives or agents shall not:

32                           (1) Interfere with, restrain or coerce state employees in the  
33 exercise of rights granted by this act;

34                           (2) Dominate or interfere with the formation or administration  
35 of any employee organization;

36                           (3) Encourage or discourage membership in or support for any

1 employee organization, committee or association;

2 (4) Discharge, discriminate or take adverse action against a  
3 state employee because the employee supports or has formed, joined or chosen  
4 to be represented by any employee organization, exercised his or her rights  
5 under this act, filed an affidavit, petition or complaint, or given any  
6 information or testimony under this act;

7 (5) Refuse to recognize or to negotiate collectively with an  
8 employee bargaining representative as required in this act.

9 (b) An employee organization and its representatives or agents shall  
10 not:

11 (1) Interfere with, restrain, or coerce state employees in the  
12 exercise of rights granted by this act;

13 (2) Restrain or coerce an employer with respect to selecting a  
14 representative for the purposes of negotiating collectively on the adjustment  
15 of grievances;

16 (3) Refuse to bargain collectively with an employer as required  
17 in this act;

18 (4) Breach its duty of fair representation if the breach results  
19 from action or inaction that was arbitrary, discriminatory, or in bad faith.

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21 SECTION 8. Prohibited practice violations.

22 (a) The board shall prevent and remedy any prohibited practices under  
23 this act.

24 (b) An order of the board under this section may be enforced by any  
25 party to the board proceeding by filing a petition with the appropriate  
26 circuit court.

27  
28 SECTION 9. Judicial review.

29 The board's review of proposed decisions and the rehearing or judicial  
30 review of final decisions are governed by the provisions of the Arkansas  
31 Administrative Procedure Act beginning at Arkansas Code 25-15-201.

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33 SECTION 10. Exclusive representation process.

34 (a) Selection. The selection of a bargaining representative is the  
35 prerogative of state employees and employers shall maintain a neutral  
36 position with respect to the decision and choice by employees of an employee

1 bargaining representative.

2 (b) Majority designation by employees. An employee organization that  
3 is designated as the collective bargaining representative by a majority of  
4 state employees in an appropriate unit may request recognition as the  
5 exclusive representative of such unit by the employer. The request shall  
6 identify the unit sought to be represented and the basis on which majority  
7 support is claimed. The employer shall grant the requested recognition  
8 unless:

9 (1) The employer has a reasonable, good faith doubt as to the  
10 accuracy or validity of the employee organization's claim of majority  
11 support;

12 (2) The board currently has pending a request by another employee  
13 organization for a representation election for employees who would be  
14 included within the requested unit; or

15 (3) The bargaining unit sought is not appropriate.

16 (c) Board conducted election.

17 (1) An employee organization may file a request for a secret  
18 ballot election with the board upon a showing of thirty percent (30%)  
19 interest among employees in a designated bargaining unit.

20 (2) Upon receipt of the petition, the board shall determine  
21 whether it is appropriate to direct and conduct a secret ballot election.

22 (A) The petition shall be dismissed if the board  
23 determines that:

24 (i) The bargaining unit sought is not appropriate;

25 (ii) The petition is not supported by at least  
26 thirty percent (30%) of the employees;

27 (iii) The employee organization filing the request  
28 had been decertified or lost a representation election for the same unit  
29 within the previous twelve (12) months; or

30 (iv) Another employee or organization has been  
31 lawfully recognized or certified as exclusive bargaining representative for  
32 employees included within the unit within the previous twelve (12) months, or  
33 is party to a collective bargaining agreement to which the board determines a  
34 contract bar applies.

35 (B) Unless the petition is dismissed, the board, within  
36 thirty (30) days after receipt of a petition, shall enter an order

1 establishing the time and place for a secret ballot election. The board  
2 shall give no less than ten (10) days' notice of the time and place of the  
3 election.

4 (3) Following the filing of a petition, any employee  
5 organization may intervene and be included on the election ballot upon a  
6 timely showing of proof satisfactory to the board of support from at least  
7 ten percent (10%) of the employees in the unit.

8 (4) The question on the ballot shall include, in addition to the  
9 petitioning employee organization and any other employee organization that  
10 has timely intervened, a choice for "no representative".

11 (5)(A) If a majority of the votes cast in the election is for  
12 one (1) employee organization, then that employee organization shall be  
13 certified as the exclusive representative.

14 (B) If a majority of the votes cast in the election is for  
15 "no representative", then the board shall certify that the employees elected  
16 to have no exclusive representative.

17 (C) If none of the choices on the ballot receive a  
18 majority of the votes, then the board shall conduct a runoff election between  
19 the two choices receiving the greatest number of votes.

20 (6) The board shall promulgate regulations concerning the  
21 conduct of elections including access rights for employee organizations to  
22 communicate with state employees and means for guaranteeing the secrecy of  
23 the ballot.

24 (d) Determination of bargaining unit.

25 (1) The board shall not intervene in matters of recognition and  
26 unit definition except in the event of a dispute between the parties.

27 (2) In the event of a dispute, the board shall conduct a public  
28 hearing, receive written or oral testimony, and promptly thereafter file an  
29 order defining the appropriate bargaining unit.

30 (3) The board shall prescribe rules and regulations and  
31 establish procedures for the determination of appropriate bargaining units.  
32 In defining the unit, the board shall take into consideration, along with  
33 other relevant factors, the principles of efficient administration of  
34 government, the desire to avoid excessive fragmentation, the community of  
35 interest among the employees, the history and extent of the state employee  
36 organization, the geographical location and the recommendations of the



1 parties involved. Professional employees shall not be included in a unit  
2 with nonprofessional employees unless a majority of professional employees  
3 voting agree. Health care employees providing direct care shall not be  
4 included in a unit with non-direct care employees unless a majority of the  
5 direct care employees voting agree. Guards, corrections officers and police  
6 officers shall not be included in a unit with other employees unless a  
7 majority of the guards, corrections officers, or police officers agree.

8  
9 SECTION 11. Collective bargaining.

10 (a) Exclusive representative. The lawfully recognized or certified  
11 exclusive bargaining representative selected by state employees shall be the  
12 exclusive representative of all the employees in the unit. An employee  
13 organization may assess a reasonable fee to a non-member for services  
14 rendered in representing the employee in a negotiated grievance or  
15 arbitration procedure in the absence of an alternative fee system negotiated  
16 between the parties.

17 (b) Commencement of negotiations. Following recognition or  
18 certification of an employee organization as exclusive representative or  
19 within ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of a collective bargaining  
20 agreement between the parties, the designated representatives of the employee  
21 organization and of the employer shall commence collective bargaining with an  
22 aim to reaching an agreement in an expeditious manner.

23 (c) Scope of negotiations.

24 (1) The employer and the employee organization may negotiate  
25 regarding hours, non-monetary terms and conditions of employment, shift  
26 differentials, seniority, transfer procedures, health and safety matters,  
27 evaluation procedures, procedures for staff reduction, in-service training,  
28 class size and other matters mutually agreed upon.

29 (2) Every collective bargaining agreement shall include:

30 (A) Procedures to address state employee grievances and  
31 disputes over the interpretation and application of agreements; and

32 (B) A provision for dues checkoff.

33 (d) Enforcement of agreement.

34 (1) The parties to a collective bargaining agreement may provide  
35 for the final and binding arbitration of disputes arising under the  
36 agreement.

1           (2) The judicial review, if any, of the arbitration decisions  
2 shall be pursuant to the Uniform Arbitration Act.

3           (3) In the absence of an agreement for the arbitration of  
4 disputes, the terms of any collective bargaining agreement may be enforced by  
5 the appropriate circuit court upon the initiative of either party.

6           (e) Limitations.

7           (1) No collective bargaining agreement or arbitrator's decision  
8 shall be valid or enforceable if its implementation would be inconsistent  
9 with any statutory limitation on the employer's funds, or budget, or would  
10 substantially impair or limit the performance of any statutory duty by the  
11 employer.

12           (2) Nothing in this act shall limit the power of the General  
13 Assembly to fix the number or salaries of state employees.

14  
15           SECTION 12. Impasse procedures.

16           (a) Absence of impasse agreement. In the absence of an impasse  
17 agreement negotiated between the parties, the procedures prescribed in this  
18 section shall apply.

19           (b) Mediation. If an agreement has not been reached within ninety  
20 (90) days after the initiation of collective bargaining, the board shall,  
21 within five (5) days after the request of either party, appoint an impartial  
22 and disinterested person to act as mediator for the purpose of assisting the  
23 parties in reconciling their differences and resolving the controversy on  
24 mutually acceptable terms. The mediator shall take immediate steps to meet  
25 with the parties and may take such other steps as deemed appropriate in order  
26 to persuade the parties to resolve their differences and effect a mutually  
27 acceptable agreement in a timely fashion. The board may compel the  
28 attendance of all parties at any and all meetings scheduled by the mediator.  
29 If the mediator has not effected a settlement of the issue in dispute within  
30 ten (10) days of his or her appointment, either party, by written  
31 notification to the other, may request implementation of the arbitration  
32 procedure described in subsection (c). This section does not preclude the  
33 parties from mutually agreeing upon a mediator who, upon the parties joint  
34 request, shall be appointed by the board to serve in that capacity.

35           (c) Fact Finding.

36           (1) If the impasse persists ten (10) days after the mediator has

1 been appointed, the board shall appoint a fact finder representative of the  
2 public from a list of qualified persons maintained by the board.

3 (2) The fact finder shall conduct a hearing, may administer  
4 oaths, and may request the board to issue subpoenas.

5 (3) The fact finder shall secure from both parties agreements  
6 reached by the parties prior to fact finding and the final position of each  
7 party with regard to any subject of bargaining as to which the parties have  
8 not reached agreement.

9 (4) In determining whether to include in his or her  
10 recommendations the final position of either party, the fact finder shall  
11 consider the following factors:

12 (A) Agreements reached in collective bargaining prior to  
13 fact finding;

14 (B) The ability of the employer to meet costs, including  
15 both available financial resources and sources of additional financial  
16 resources, in light of any state imposed limitations on local spending or  
17 revenue;

18 (C) The terms and conditions of employment of the  
19 employees involved in fact finding hearings as compared to the terms and  
20 conditions of employment of other employees of the employer and of other  
21 public and private sector employees performing similar services in the same  
22 community and in comparable communities; and

23 (D) Other factors that traditionally are taken into  
24 consideration in the determination of terms and conditions of employment  
25 through collective bargaining in public and private sector employment.

26 (4) The fact finder shall make written findings of facts and  
27 recommendations for resolution of the dispute and, not later than fifteen  
28 (15) days after the date of appointment, shall serve the findings and  
29 recommendations on the employer and the employee organization.

30 (5) The employer shall immediately accept the fact finder's  
31 recommendations or shall make public the report of the fact finder.

32 (6) The employer shall, on the sixth working day after making  
33 the fact finder report public, take action of acceptance or rejection of each  
34 recommendation of the fact finder.

35 (7) However, during the period of time between the employer  
36 making the report public and taking action, the parties shall continue to

1 make good faith efforts to resolve the dispute.  
2

3 SECTION 13. Registration of employee organizations.

4 (a) An employee organization seeking to represent state employees  
5 under the provisions of this act shall file with the board a registration  
6 document stating its intent to become a representative of state employees.

7 (b) Any employee organization subject to the Labor-Management  
8 Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, beginning at 29 U.S.C. 401, may file  
9 with the board copies of all reports required to be filed under that act in  
10 lieu of the filings required by this act, other than those required by  
11 subsection (a).

12  
13 SECTION 14. Filing agreement public access.

14 Copies of collective bargaining agreements entered into between the  
15 employer and the state employee's bargaining representative and made final  
16 under this act shall be filed with the Secretary of State and be made  
17 available to the public at cost.

18  
19 SECTION 15. General delegation.

20 The General Assembly specifically confers upon the board and all  
21 employers the power and authority to implement the provisions of this act,  
22 and further confers upon all employers the authority to recognize and enter  
23 into collective bargaining agreements with employee organizations.

24  
25 SECTION 16. Involvement of Governor's Office.

26 All employer functions shall be administered through the Office of the  
27 Governor, who may designate an official state negotiator to engage in  
28 collective bargaining negotiations and oversight on behalf of the employer.

29  
30 SECTION 17. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the  
31 General Assembly that this act creates the State Employment Relations Board;  
32 that the appropriation for the operation of the board becomes effective at  
33 the beginning of the next fiscal year; that it is necessary to coordinate the  
34 effective date of this substantive act with its companion appropriation acts;  
35 and that this emergency clause must be adopted to accomplish that purpose.  
36 Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist and this act being immediately

1 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall  
2 become effective on July 1, 2003.

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