



Agricultural Worker Labor and Employment Laws Study Committee

Overview of Committee Charge and Duties

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Damien Leonard, Office of Legislative Counsel



Enabling Legislation and General Committee Charge

- Created by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 117, § 3
- Committee is directed to “examine the application of Vermont’s labor relations and employment laws to agricultural workers in Vermont and to identify potential legislative action to provide additional coverage to agricultural workers under those laws.”



Committee Organization

- 8 members, 4 from the House and 4 from the Senate
- Committee selects its Chair at the first meeting
- 5 or more Committee members needed for a quorum
- Committee has funding for up to 6 meetings
- Committee has assistance from Legislative Operations, Joint Fiscal Office, and Legislative Counsel
- Committee ceases to exist on December 31, 2024



Committee Research and Duties

- Identify existing employment rights for agricultural workers under Vermont and federal law
- Identify Vermont and federal employment and collective bargaining laws that do not apply to some or all Vermont agricultural workers
- Identify laws in other states that provide employment or collective bargaining rights to agricultural workers that Vermont agricultural workers do not have

Committee Research and Duties

- With particular attention to states with agricultural economies similar to Vermont's, examine the structure of collective bargaining rights for agricultural workers in other states that provide such rights, including:
 - Coverage
 - Certification of exclusive bargaining representatives
 - Subjects for bargaining
 - Procedures for resolving bargaining impasse
 - Unfair labor practices
 - Costs related to organizing and contract negotiation for both employers and labor organizations

Committee Research and Duties

- Examine the structure of Vermont's existing labor relations laws, including:
 - Coverage
 - Certification of exclusive bargaining representatives
 - Subjects for bargaining
 - Procedures for resolving bargaining impasse
 - Unfair labor practices
 - Costs related to organizing and contract negotiation for both employers and labor organizations



Committee Research and Duties

- Examine the capacity of the Vermont Labor Relations Board to administer collective bargaining in Vermont's agricultural sector
- Develop a framework for agricultural collective bargaining in Vermont
- Identify other potential changes to Vermont's employment laws to provide additional rights and protections to agricultural workers

Committee Report

- Required to submit a written report with Committee's findings and recommendations for legislative action to the General Assembly by December 15, 2024
- Report must include:
 - "a proposal for permitting agricultural workers to collectively bargain"
 - "a recommendation for any other legislative action to amend Vermont's employment laws in relation to agricultural workers that the Committee deems to be appropriate"
- Committee must agree on details of report by final meeting, but can sign the report after the final meeting



Committee Report: Requirements for Collective Bargaining Proposal

- Whether to provide for collective bargaining by agricultural workers under the State Labor Relations Act or in a separate agricultural workers' labor relations act
- The minimum size of agricultural employer to be covered
- Whether, and if so how, to differentiate between covered employers based on their size
- The minimum number of employees who may form a bargaining unit



Committee Report: Requirements for Collective Bargaining Proposal

- How to address seasonal, migratory, and temporary workers
- Procedures for selecting and certifying an exclusive representative for a bargaining unit
- Mandatory subjects for bargaining
- Procedures for resolving bargaining impasses, including whether to permit strikes or contract imposition



Committee Report: Requirements for Collective Bargaining Proposal

- Unfair labor practices
- The role, if any, of the Vermont Labor Relations Board in administering the proposed law
- Whether to provide State resources to assist parties during the process of determining a bargaining unit, certifying an exclusive representative for a bargaining unit, negotiating a contract, and resolving a bargaining impasse
- Any other issues the Committee deems to be appropriate