

Sixty-first  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**SENATE BILL NO.**

Introduced by

Senator Nething

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 34 of the North Dakota Century  
2 Code, relating to limited collective bargaining partnerships for executive branch agencies.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1.** A new chapter to title 34 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and  
5 enacted as follows:

6 **Strike or work stoppage prohibited.** A partnership agreement negotiated under this  
7 chapter must contain an agreement not to strike. It is a violation of this chapter for a certified  
8 employee organization to engage in or threaten strike, work stoppage, work slowdown, sickout,  
9 or other similar disruptive measure against the state. If a certified employee organization  
10 violates this chapter, the commissioner may decertify the certified employee organization and  
11 the decertified employee organization may not use payroll deductions of any membership dues.

12 **Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

13 1. "Certified employee organization" means an employee organization selected by a  
14 majority of the employees voting in a secret ballot election held under this chapter  
15 for the purpose of exclusive representation and certified by the commissioner.

16 2. "Commissioner" means the labor commissioner.

17 3. "Covered employee" means an individual employed by an executive branch  
18 agency who occupies a position in the classified service under section 54-44.3-20.

19 The term does not include:

20 a. A temporary employee employed for six months or less;

21 b. An individual in the custody of the department of corrections and  
22 rehabilitation;

23 c. An administrative law judge;

24 d. An attorney whose responsibilities include providing legal advice;

- 1           e. The governor's designee and any employee working with the labor  
2           commissioner and the governor's designee to implement this chapter;  
3           f. A member of the North Dakota national guard;  
4           g. A managerial employee; and  
5           h. A supervisory employee.
- 6       4. "Employee organization" means an organization in which covered employees may  
7       participate and which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with the  
8       state as employer concerning issues of mutual concern between covered  
9       employees and the state.
- 10      5. "Executive branch agency" means an executive branch state agency, board,  
11      commission, department, office, or other administrative unit of the executive branch  
12      of state government.
- 13      6. "Governor's designee" means the individual designated by the governor to  
14      represent the executive branch of state government in the exercise of all of the  
15      state executive branch duties under this chapter.
- 16      7. "Partnership agreement" means an agreement arrived at through good-faith  
17      discussions between the governor's designee, on behalf of the executive branch,  
18      and representatives of the certified employee organizations, on behalf of the  
19      covered employees, that provides for improving government services, achieving  
20      efficiencies, and establishing the framework for discussing issues of mutual  
21      concern to the covered employees of the state. As necessary, the term includes  
22      an agreement addressing issues on a multi-unit basis, agency-specific basis, or  
23      occupational group-specific basis, and may include memorandums of  
24      understanding directed to particular issues or objectives.
- 25      8. "Partnership unit" means a unit consisting of covered employees in a single  
26      occupational group.
- 27      9. "Supervisory employee" means an employee who is an appointing authority. The  
28      term does not include an employee who performs the human resource functions of  
29      an appointing authority by delegation.

30      **Application.** This chapter is in addition to chapter 34-12.

31      **Commissioner's duties.**

- 1       1. The commissioner shall serve as a neutral party charged with implementing and  
2       administering this chapter, resolving issues that may arise under this chapter, and  
3       adopting rules as necessary for the proper implementation of this chapter.
- 4       2. The commissioner may appoint a three-member panel to advise and make  
5       recommendations to the commissioner regarding matters delegated to the  
6       commissioner under this chapter. If the commissioner appoints a panel under this  
7       subsection, each member of the panel:
  - 8       a. Serves at the pleasure of the commissioner;
  - 9       b. Is entitled to receive compensation as established by the commissioner which  
10       may not exceed one hundred thirty dollars for each day engaged in  
11       performance of duties of the panel; and
  - 12       c. Must have experience in public sector labor relations, in teaching labor or  
13       employment relations, or in administering laws or policies applicable to labor  
14       or employment relations.
- 15       3. The commissioner shall appoint qualified mediators as necessary to assist parties  
16       in resolving impasses and disputes, issue findings of fact, and make  
17       recommendations to the parties. A mediator appointed under this subsection must  
18       be a disinterested party who is mutually acceptable to the involved parties.
- 19       4. The commissioner shall conduct elections and make determinations regarding  
20       certification of exclusive representation. In conducting elections, the commissioner  
21       shall appoint election monitors to take complaints regarding the conduct of  
22       elections and to make recommendations regarding the disposition of such  
23       complaints.
- 24       5. The commissioner shall designate occupational groups for purposes of partnership  
25       units.

26       **Determination of representation.**

- 27       1. The commissioner shall certify an employee organization as the exclusive  
28       representative of a partnership unit if the organization is designated as the  
29       partnership unit's representative by a majority of the covered employees voting  
30       within the partnership unit.

- 1           2. An employee organization may petition for certification by submitting to the  
2           commissioner a petition for exclusive representation. The petition must be  
3           accompanied by a showing of interest indicating the desire of the covered  
4           employees in a partnership unit to be exclusively represented by the petitioner for  
5           the purpose of negotiating a partnership agreement. The show of interest must be  
6           signed and dated by the employees within the twelve months preceding  
7           submission. A covered employee who is a dues-paying member of an employee  
8           organization is deemed to have expressed a show of interest in favor of the  
9           employee organization in which the covered employee is a member unless and  
10          until the covered employee expresses a contrary intent in writing. If a show of  
11          interest accompanying a petition is thirty percent or more of the covered  
12          employees in the partnership unit, the commissioner shall direct that an election be  
13          held. Within ten calendar days of determination that a valid petition has been  
14          submitted and election is necessary, the commissioner shall notify the interested  
15          employee organization and the governor's designee of the pending election  
16          petition.
- 17          3. An interested employee organization may intervene in an election if the interested  
18          employee organization submits a petition of intervention to the commissioner within  
19          fifteen days of notice of the pending election. A petition of intervention must be  
20          accompanied by a show of interest supported by thirty percent of the covered  
21          employees in the partnership unit indicating the covered employees' desire to be  
22          exclusively represented by the intervenor for the purpose of negotiating a  
23          partnership agreement.
- 24          4. An election under this section must be held in accordance with rules adopted by  
25          the commissioner. In an election, covered employees have the option of voting to  
26          be exclusively represented by the petitioning employee organization, to be  
27          exclusively represented by an intervening employee organization, or to reject  
28          exclusive representation by any employee organization. An election may take  
29          place by mail ballot, onsite balloting, or a combination of mail balloting and onsite  
30          balloting. An employee organization seeking certification under this section shall  
31          bear the costs associated with conducting and administering the certification

elections, including printing, postage, and other supplies, as well as any temporary staff or overtime determined necessary to verify signatures, to staff or monitor polling places, and to determine the results of an election. If two or more employee organizations seek certification in a single election, the costs of conducting and administering the election must be borne equally by the respective employee organizations.

5. If none of the alternatives listed on the ballot receives a majority of the valid ballots cast in the partnership unit in any initial representation election held under this section, a runoff election must be held between the employee organization that received the highest number of votes cast in the initial election and the option of rejecting representation by any employee organization. If an employee organization received the majority of the valid ballots cast in the partnership unit, the commissioner shall certify that employee organization as the exclusive representative of the covered employees in the partnership unit.

6. Neither the commissioner nor any management or supervisory employee may encourage or discourage membership in any employee organization nor encourage or discourage exclusive representation of employees by any employee organization.

7. Certification of an employee organization as an exclusive representative continues as long as the employee organization satisfies the criteria of this chapter and rules adopted by the commissioner. A petition to decertify an existing exclusive representative may be filed in the same manner as a petition for certification, except a decertification petition may not be filed for a partnership unit if:

a. An election has been held in that partnership unit within the preceding twelve months;

b. An exclusive representative of that partnership unit has been certified within the preceding two years; or

c. The partnership unit has in effect a valid occupational group-specific partnership agreement that by its terms does not exceed three years. The limitation imposed under this subdivision does not bar the filing of a

1                   decertification petition within the ninety-day period immediately preceding the  
2                   expiration of the partnership agreement.

- 3           8.   If a decertification petition is filed, the existing exclusive representative is deemed  
4           an intervenor on that petition and may not be required to submit a show of interest.

5           **Membership dues.** A partnership agreement negotiated under this chapter must  
6           contain a provision prohibiting a certified employee organization from charging any fee from a  
7           covered employee who is not a dues-paying member of that organization.

8           **Filing requirements for certified employee organizations.**

- 9           1.   Each certified employee organization shall file and keep current with the  
10           commissioner:

11           a.   The organization's constitution and bylaws. A certified employee organization  
12           may file the constitution and bylaws of the organization's national or  
13           international organization in lieu of a filing of the constitution and bylaws of the  
14           subordinate organization.

15           b.   A list of the organization's officers and their addresses.

16           c.   A copy of the most recently completed audit required by the certified  
17           employee organization's constitution and bylaws.

- 18           2.   The commissioner shall reasonably construct the filing requirements of  
19           subsection 1 to allow for several organizations to affiliate or jointly file to seek  
20           certification under this chapter.

21           **Negotiating partnership agreements.** The governor's designee and the  
22           representatives of the certified employee organizations have a mutual obligation to negotiate  
23           the terms of the partnership agreement in good faith and at reasonable times and places. The  
24           discussions regarding partnership agreements can be initiated by the governor's designee or in  
25           response to a proposal by a certified employee organization or a coalition of certified employee  
26           organizations. A particular partnership agreement may be negotiated, depending on the nature  
27           of the issues subject to the agreement, on a statewide basis, occupational group basis, or  
28           department basis.

29           **Partnership agreements on matters necessitating statewide uniformity.** A  
30           partnership agreement that governs discussions of matters impacting all covered employees as  
31           a whole or that necessitate statewide uniformity must be negotiated on a collaborative basis

1 with all certified employee organizations. The negotiation of such a partnership agreement  
2 must be conducted by the governor's designee in concert with the executive officials charged  
3 with administering issues subject to the agreement and with a designee or negotiating team  
4 selected by a coalition of the certified employee organizations. Such a partnership agreement  
5 is subject to the approval of the governor and other officials charged with administering the  
6 issues subject to the agreement.

7 **Partnership agreements on matters affecting individual occupational groups. A**  
8 partnership agreement that governs discussions of matters impacting covered employees in a  
9 single occupational group must be negotiated with the certified employee organization  
10 representing that occupational group and with the governor's designee in concert with the  
11 executive officials charged with administering the issues subject to the agreement. Such a  
12 partnership agreement is subject to the approval of the governor and other officials charged  
13 with administering the issues subject to the agreement.

14 **Partnership agreements on matters involving particular departments.**

- 15 1. A partnership agreement that governs discussions of matters impacting covered  
16 employees in a single department must be negotiated by the executive director of  
17 the department in concert with the governor's designee and with a designee or  
18 negotiating team selected by a coalition of the certified employee organizations  
19 representing covered employees in the respective department. Such a partnership  
20 agreement is subject to the approval of the executive director of the department  
21 and the governor.
- 22 2. The executive directors of executive branch agencies with covered employees  
23 shall negotiate in good faith a partnership agreement with the certified employee  
24 organizations representing the covered employees in their agencies.
- 25 3. A partnership agreement does not diminish the governor's discretion to prepare a  
26 proposed budget, including setting the amount allocated to total employee  
27 compensation in that proposed budget. A partnership agreement may not include  
28 a requirement or an agreement that the executive branch or executive branch  
29 agency negotiate with respect to the statutory functions of any executive branch  
30 agency or to matters related to the public employees retirement system.

1           **Impasse and dispute resolution.** If the parties reach an impasse in the course of  
2 negotiating a partnership agreement, either the governor's designee or a representative of a  
3 certified employee organization may request that the commissioner appoint a neutral third party  
4 to mediate any dispute over the terms and conditions of a partnership agreement. The  
5 appointed mediator may make nonbinding written recommendations to the parties for resolution  
6 of the impasse. Upon successful completion of negotiation, the parties shall execute a written  
7 partnership agreement. The terms of a partnership agreement may provide procedures for  
8 resolving disputes, including disputes over the interpretation and application of a partnership  
9 agreement. Dispute resolution procedures may include nonbinding mediation and factfinding  
10 but may not include binding arbitration.