

# **Senator Baldwin's Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act**

## **Background:**

The objective of this legislation is to provide basic collective bargaining rights for police officers, fire fighters and EMS personnel. While most first responders live in jurisdictions where these rights are provided, many still go without needed workplace protections. Providing employers and their workers with a framework to define benefits and solve disputes is necessary to ensure a productive workforce and a safe working environment.

The House companion is led by Dan Kildee (D-MI) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA).

## **The Legislation:**

Senator Baldwin's bill requires that all firefighters, police officers, and EMS are provided the ability to form and join a labor union. Additionally, they must be allowed to collectively bargain over hours, wages and terms and conditions of employment. The legislation gives states that do not currently provide these protections two years to comply.

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), which administers the labor-management program for federal workers, will be designated with managing the implementation of the act. The bill does not supersede any local laws that have "comparable to or greater than" collective bargaining rights currently enshrined in local law. Further, existing collective bargaining agreements established on or before enactment of this law will not be affected. Finally, Strikes and lockouts are prohibited in this act for police, fire or EMS personnel.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

The Act outlines 5 key rights that each employee will have access to; determined to represent a minimum set of benefits that all employees should be given.

- The right to form and join a union organization (which may exclude management employees, supervisory employees, and confidential employees)
- The right to have the employer recognize the union organization, to agree to bargain with the labor organization and to commit any agreements to writing in a contract of understanding.
- The right to bargain over hours, wages and terms of conditions of employment.
- The right to provide for binding interest arbitration as a mechanism to resolve an impasse in collective bargaining negotiations.
- The right of enforcement of all rights and responsibilities agreed to between an employer and labor organization by either a.) a State administrative agency or b.) any court of competent jurisdiction.

**Who else supports this bill?** Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin (PFFW), Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA), Milwaukee Police Association, Wisconsin Law Enforcement Association (FOP Wisconsin State Patrol Lodge 17), International Association of Fire Fighters, Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, International Union of Police Associations, USW, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, NFFE, CWA, AFT, NEA, ILA and LiUNA