

colleges. They can request the appointment of a special master to hear the case. The bill sets forth procedures to follow in cases heard by a special master including a provision that the strict rules of evidence need not be applied. These procedures are set forth on pages 8 and 9 of the bill, Section 3 of the bill and include the following: A provision that after filing a petition in the Commission of Industrial Relations either party may request an appointment of the special master. The CIR would provide the names of five qualified individuals and if the parties cannot agree on one, they shall each alternatively strike names until only one remains. This person shall be the special master. The special master determines when the issues are ready and shall conduct the hearing. If a party is dissatisfied with the findings of a special master, that person may file with the commission which shall determine the action, not as an appeal, but as an action originally brought with the CIR. It can only review the issues determined by the special master to be an individual dispute. The bill also provides that the parties to an action in the CIR may request that the commission send survey forms or data requests at parties' expenses. The public policy behind the bill is to try to bring the two parties, those being in the case of a school district the school board and the teacher association, together to try to resolve an issue over wages, benefits, and to try to bring them together at a point so their budget, their wages and benefits can be resolved prior to the school district submitting their budget to the local county. And I do believe that this has been a problem in our state in that we haven't had in a number of instances school districts resolving their issues of salary disputes in a timely manner as required by state statute. The intent of the bill is to try and bring the two parties together by bringing in a third party to arbitrate the dispute, a third party that does not have any vested interest in either side to try to resolve the issue before it would head towards the CIR. Now it doesn't necessarily result, because they go through a special master process, it certainly does not result in that these two groups will end up before the Commission of Industrial Relations. It's our hope that by bringing them forward, going before an arbitrary neutral third party that this will discourage further appeal up to the Commission of Industrial Relations and thus save the school districts as well as the associations a great deal of money and legal expenses as well as getting the background information that's necessary to make their case before the CIR. So we also see it as a way to save money for the school district because they will not have the