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City of Ames v. Iowa Public Employment Relations Board

Supreme Court of Iowa - February 24, 2023 - N.W.2d - 2023 WL 2192913

City filed petition for judicial review challenging Public Employee Relations Board's (PERB) ruling that broader bargaining rights must be extended to the city's nontransit employees in a bargaining unit consisting of at least 30 percent transit employees.

The District Court denied the petition. City appealed.

The Supreme Court held that city was not required to provide broader bargaining rights to nontransit employees in bargaining unit with 30 percent transit employees.

City employer was not required to provide broader bargaining rights to nontransit employees in a bargaining unit, regardless of whether the bargaining unit had 30 percent transit employees, pursuant to provision of the Iowa Public Employee Relations Act (PERA) that extended the rights of public safety workers to transit employees as necessary to avoid the loss of federal transit funding under the Urban Mass Transportation Act (UMTA), which was conditioned upon labor protections for transit workers; scope of the PERA provision was limited to determining the substantive bargaining rights of transit employees, and extending broader bargaining rights to nontransit employees had nothing to do with provision's purpose of protecting federal funding.