

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2446

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 14, 1996

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Creating two additional superior court positions for Chelan and Douglas counties jointly.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representative Foreman; by request of Administrator for the Courts).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/14/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin and Schow.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the office of the Administrator for the Courts conducts a weighted caseload study to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. Currently, Chelan and Douglas counties jointly have three judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the Administrator for the Courts indicates a need, as of 1995, for 4.53 judges in the counties.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary of a superior court judge is paid by the state. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Summary of Amended Bill: The number of judicial positions in Chelan and Douglas counties is increased from three to five. Both additional judicial positions take effect January 1, 1997.

The new judicial positions become effective only if the legislative authorities of Chelan and Douglas counties jointly agree that the counties will pay their share of the cost of the positions without reimbursement from the state.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The striking amendment provides that the judicial positions take effect on January 1, 1997, instead of February 1, 1997.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The judicial positions created in section 1 are effective January 1, 1997.

Testimony For: The two counties need the additional judges to handle their criminal and civil caseloads.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Foreman, original prime sponsor.