

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6495

As Passed Senate, February 13, 1996

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

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

Sponsors: Senators Smith and Sellar; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/29/96, 1/30/96 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/6/96 [DP]

Passed Senate, 2/13/96, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Hargrove, Johnson, Long, McCaslin and Roach.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Cantu, Drew, Finkbeiner, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Moyer, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Strannigan, Sutherland, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: By statute, the Legislature determines the number of superior court judicial positions in each county or joint county. The counties of Chelan and Douglas currently share three superior court judges. The counties have experienced growth in the number of cases filed and tried in their superior courts.

The Washington State Administrator for the Courts has conducted a "weighted caseload" study and estimates that Chelan-Douglas Counties need additional superior court judges to handle the current civil and criminal caseload.

The Washington State Constitution provides that the state and counties share the salary expense for superior court judges. Other costs associated with the judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Summary of Bill: Two additional superior court judicial positions are authorized for Chelan and Douglas Counties jointly, increasing the number of superior court judicial positions in the counties from three to five. The additional judicial positions are effective January 1, 1997.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For (Law & Justice): The county commissioners have approved the additional superior court judicial positions and the counties need the judges to handle the increased workload.

Testimony Against (Law & Justice): None.

Testified (Law & Justice): Chuck Foster, Board for Judicial Administration.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): None.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): No one.