

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2799

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Judiciary, February 25, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to granting state-wide warrant jurisdiction to courts of limited jurisdiction.

**Brief Description:** Granting state-wide warrant jurisdiction to courts of limited jurisdiction.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Lambert, Hurst, Kagi, Benson, Lovick and Pflug).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/21/2000, 2/25/2000 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** District and municipal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction. In criminal matters, district courts have jurisdiction over misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor offenses committed within the county and over violations of city ordinances. Municipal courts have jurisdiction over matters arising from city ordinances and concurrent jurisdiction with district courts over misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor offenses.

Warrants issued by a court of limited jurisdiction are enforceable within the jurisdiction of the issuing court.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) must establish a pilot program for the statewide processing of warrants issued by courts of limited jurisdiction. The OAC must establish procedures and criteria for courts of limited jurisdiction to enter into agreements with other courts of limited jurisdiction in the state to process each other's warrants when the defendant is within the processing court's jurisdiction. The OAC must establish a formula for allocating, between the court that processed the warrant and the court that issued the warrant, any moneys collected and costs associated with the processing of warrants.

The processing of warrants pilot program is required to report back to the Legislature by June 1, 2003, on the effectiveness and costs of the program.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The amended bill requires the pilot program to report back to the Legislature by June 1, 2003, on the effectiveness and costs of the program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** There are approximately 325,000 outstanding warrants in Washington, with about 40,000 of them issued in DUI cases. Most warrants are for people who simply do not show up for court in the first place. This pilot program is voluntary and there must be an interlocal agreement between the participating counties. If a person pleads not guilty, he or she will need to be transferred back to the jurisdiction that issued the warrant.

**Testimony Against:** This bill creates a statewide dragnet. Our court system is hyper-punitive and makes criminals out of people needlessly. Too often people are not seen as innocent until proven guilty. Judges and law enforcement should have more options and there should be more less restrictive alternatives.

**Testified:** Representative Lambert, prime sponsor (pro); Judge Robert McBeth, King County District Court, Renton Division (pro); Judge Peter Lukevich, District and Municipal Court Judges Assn. (pro); Mr. Bugoni (con).