

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2203

As Passed House
February 8, 1994

Title: An act relating to courts.

Brief Description: Allowing superior courts to use collection agencies.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives L. Johnson, J. Kohl, Long, King, Sheldon and Springer).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Judiciary, January 26, 1994, DPS;
Passed House, February 8, 1994, 89-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Appelwick, Chair; Johanson, Vice Chair; Padden, Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Chappell; Eide; Forner; J. Kohl; Long; Morris; H. Myers; Scott; Tate and Wineberry.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: Courts may impose a variety of costs, fees, fines and assessments on parties in a legal action. Collection of these costs may be difficult. Many courts lack the personnel and resources to pursue collection, and many debts go unpaid.

District Courts are expressly authorized by statute to contract with collection agencies for the collection of debts in District Court. The statute also allows the court to assess the costs of collection against the debtor.

Summary of Bill: The Superior Courts are authorized to use collection agencies for the collection of unpaid court obligations.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The ability to use collection agencies will increase the efficiency of courts that do not have the personnel to do their own collections.

Testimony Against: The use of collection agencies in District Courts has led to excessive and unnecessary costs being charged to citizens.

Witnesses: Jan Michels, Washington Association of County Clerks (pro); Melanie Smith, Department of Corrections (pro); and Harold Chambers (con).