

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1026

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, MARCH 23, 1993

**Brief Description:** Excepting public defender services from county competitive bid requirements.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Ludwig, H. Myers, Chandler, Bray, Edmondson and Springer)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, Oke, Owen, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Katie Healy (786-7784)

**Hearing Dates:** March 23, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Counties are required to competitively bid contracts for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, and services when the contract equals or exceeds \$2,500 in value.

The competitive bidding requirements do not apply to performance-based contracts for energy equipment and supplies, or to contracts for election materials. There is no exemption from the competitive bidding requirements for public defender services.

**SUMMARY:**

A county with a population of less than 175,000 is not required to competitively bid contracts for public defender services.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:**

The population limitation is deleted.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This bill enables councils to be more efficient in determining whom they will hire as public defenders. They can get information from local attorneys and judges to see who would be competent to act as public defenders. Counties need to get their money's worth, protecting the system as well as the defendants. This bill does not mean that counties cannot bid for public defender services. They need good defense lawyers and there is not always a lot to choose from. Competitive bidding can adversely affect counties. The 175,000 limit is a concern. This would force King County into openly bidding, causing cost to become a major problem. The bid might be at a low rate, and the defendants might not be adequately represented. Forcing prosecutors to deal with less capable defense attorneys would raise the cost.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Representative Ludwig, original prime sponsor (pro);  
Randy Parr, SEIU State Council, WA Defender Association (pro)