

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESHB 1768**

**AS OF MARCH 30, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Creating a courthouse facilitator program.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Appelwick, Padden and Johanson)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE**

**Staff:** Tom Fender (786-7414)

**Hearing Dates:** April 2, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Many people seeking a marital dissolution do not hire attorneys to represent them. People who represent themselves are referred to as "pro se" litigants. Pro se litigants may be unaware of available services, such as family court service programs, and certain basic procedures to obtain a dissolution. Some courts have used "courthouse facilitators" to help pro se litigants with certain basic services, such as advising the litigants how and where the litigants may obtain mandatory standard court forms to initiate the dissolution, and forms for determining child support. The courthouse facilitator does not provide legal advice.

**SUMMARY:**

A county may create a courthouse facilitator program to provide basic services to pro se litigants in family law cases. The county legislative authority may impose user fees or may impose a surcharge on superior court filing fees for family law cases, or both, to pay for the courthouse facilitator program. Fees collected must be used just for the program.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested March 9, 1993