

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2203

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE, FEBRUARY 25, 1994

**Brief Description:** Allowing superior courts to use collection agencies.

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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE**

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

Signed by Senators A. Smith, Chairman; Ludwig, Vice Chairman; Hargrove, Nelson, Niemi, Quigley, Roach, Schow and Spanel.

**Staff:** Marty Lovinger (786-7443)

**Hearing Dates:** February 25, 1994

**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:**

The superior courts are authorized to use collection agencies for the collection of unpaid court obligations.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

Superior courts are authorized to recover collection costs from the debtor.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** yes

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Currently courts only collect a small percentage of all fines and assessments that are owed to the courts. This bill would provide courts with the tools to enable increased collection at no additional costs to the courts.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Representative Linda Johnson, original prime sponsor (pro); Jan Michels, WA Association of County Officials (pro)