

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5528

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 9, 1993

Brief Description: Altering court fees.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senator Quigley)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5528 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Alan Caplan (786-7465)

Hearing Dates: February 16, 1993; February 23, 1993

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

BACKGROUND:

Superior court clerks are authorized to collect fees for court services. The amounts of certain fees have not been adjusted for inflation and, according to county officials, no longer cover the costs of providing the relevant services. It therefore is recommended that such court fees be increased.

SUMMARY:

The following court fees are increased to the following amounts:

Motions to modify foreign dissolution--from \$20 to \$110;
Filing non-court document--from \$2 to \$20;
Issuance of garnishment--from \$5 to \$20 per garnishee;
Issuance of writ of attachment--from \$5 to \$20;
Filing will only--from \$2 to \$20;
Preparation of passport application--from \$4 to federally authorized fee (currently \$10);
Special clerk services--from \$8 to \$15 per hour;
Duplicating recordings of court proceedings--\$10 per audio tape; \$15 per video tape (currently no fee).

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

These increases will allow superior courts to recover a larger portion of the costs of providing services.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Some people seeking modification of dissolutions will not be able to pay the increased fee.

TESTIFIED: Debbie Wilkie, Washington Association of County Officials; Kay Anderson, Snohomish County Clerk; Michael Curtis

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The fee increase for petitions for modifications of foreign dissolutions is stricken. A provision allowing noncharter counties to collect fees for clerks' special services is expanded to include charter counties. The maximum fee for clerks' special services is increased to \$20 per hour from \$15 for the first hour. A county may impose user fees or a surcharge on fees for filing superior court domestic relation cases of up to \$10 or both, to create and support a courthouse facilitator program to provide basic services to pro se litigants in family law cases.