

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1398

C 347 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating additional judicial positions in the Spokane superior court.

Sponsors: Representatives Benson, Sheahan, Sump, Wood, O'Brien and Gombosky; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

House Committee on Law & Justice

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) conducts a weighted caseload analysis to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. The Legislature has authorized 11 judges for Spokane County, 13 for Snohomish County, and 19 for Pierce County. The analysis by the OAC indicates a need, as of 1996, for an additional 3.37 judges in Spokane County, an additional 6.19 judges in Snohomish County, and an additional 8.37 judges in Pierce County.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary and other employee benefits of a superior court judge are paid by the state. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Summary: The number of statutorily authorized judicial positions in Spokane County is increased from 11 to 13. The additional judicial positions take effect upon the effective date of the act, but the actual starting dates may be established by the Spokane County Commissioners upon the request of the superior court.

The number of statutorily authorized judicial positions in Snohomish County is increased from 13 to 15. The new positions take effect January 1, 1998, but the actual starting dates may be established by the Snohomish County council upon request of the superior court and by recommendation of the Snohomish County executive.

The number of statutorily authorized judicial positions in Pierce County is increased from 19 to 25. One of the additional judicial positions will take effect January 1, 1998, two will take effect on January 1, 1999, and two will take effect on January 1, 2000. The actual starting dates may be established by the Pierce County council upon request of the superior court and recommendation of the Pierce County executive.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0

Senate 48 0 (Senate amended)

House 91 0 (House concurred)

Effective: July 27, 1997