

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2293

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the number of district court judges.

Brief Description: Authorizing Snohomish county to create one additional district court position.

Sponsors: Representatives Sherstad, Sheahan and Costa; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/14/98, 1/20/98 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/7/98, 93-0.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz; Mulliken; Robertson and Sherstad.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: The number of district court judges in each county is set by statute. There is a procedure, also in statute, for changing the number of judges in a county.

The Legislature may change the number of district court judges in a county upon the recommendation of the supreme court. The process of formulating such a recommendation involves the use of a "weighted caseload" analysis developed by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) in consultation with the Board of Judicial Administration, the Judicial Council, and the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association. The weighted caseload analysis includes consideration of the amount of judicial time and resources needed to process various kinds of cases.

For each recommended increase in the number of district court judges in a county, the OAC is to prepare a judicial impact note detailing any local or state cost associated with the change.

The costs associated with an increase in the number of judges may be paid for by the county out of the county criminal justice assistance account.

The OAC is recommending that the number of district court judges in Snohomish County be increased from seven to eight.

Summary of Bill: The number of district court judges in Snohomish County is increased from seven to eight.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The county council has agreed to fund the positions, and the need for them has been demonstrated.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Judge Steve Dwyer, Washington State Municipal and District Court Judges Association (pro).