

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS
HB 2572

Title: An act relating to treatment for alcoholism, intoxication, and drug addiction.

Brief Description: Funding drug courts.

Sponsors: Representatives Ballasiotes, Radcliff, Lambert, Costa, O'Brien, Tokuda, Cole; Dickerson, Kessler, Constantine, and Wood.:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONS

Hearing Date: January 30, 1998.

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Background: Drug Court is a program that removes drug offenders from standard criminal procedures and forces them into treatment. There are currently drug courts in King, Pierce, Spokane, and Thurston counties.

The courts diverge from traditional courts by diverting non-violent drug criminals into court-ordered treatment programs rather than prison. The program allows people arrested for drug possession to choose an intensive, heavily supervised rehabilitation program in lieu of incarceration. In Drug Court defendants agree to the facts of their arrest, then are required to participate in drug treatment, counseling, find work, meet with parole officers, attend weekly visits with a judge, and meet conditions set by a judge.

If they complete the program, the charges can be dropped. If a defendant fails, he or she can ultimately be sentenced at the top of the sentencing range and jailed but the courts typically give drug defendants more than one chance to reform.

With the incentive of keeping an offender's record clear of drug charges, the court pushes people with substance abuse problems into a year-long program of frequent drug tests and counseling.

The aim of the court is to encourage drug offenders into a productive, drug-free lifestyle.

Summary:

The term "drug court" is defined as a court that has special calendars or dockets designed to achieve a reduction in recidivism and substance abuse among nonviolent, substance abusing offenders by increasing their likelihood for successful rehabilitation through early, continuous, and intense judicially supervised treatment; mandatory periodic drug testing; and the use of appropriate sanctions and

other rehabilitation services.

The Department of Social and Health Services must contract with counties operating drug courts for the provision of drug and alcohol treatment services. A minimum of eighty percent of the funds appropriated must be used for direct services to clients. A maximum of ten percent of the funds appropriated must be used for administration and an outcome evaluation study. The study must include measures of recidivism and re-offense rates.

An appropriation is provided to the Department of Social and Health Services for the funding of drug courts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1999, however the specific funding amount is not defined. **Rules Authority:**No.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

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