

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5284

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Providing for additional judges for Snohomish county superior court.

Sponsors: Senators Long, Strannigan, Haugen, McAuliffe and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 3/26/97 [DP].

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; Radcliff; Sherstad and Skinner.

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts conducts a weighted caseload study to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. Snohomish County has 13 statutorily authorized judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the Office of the Administrator for the Courts indicates a need, as of 1996, for an additional 6.19 judicial officers in the county.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary 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 of Bill: The number of statutorily authorized judicial positions in Snohomish County is increased from 13 to 15. The additional judicial positions will take effect January 1, 1998, but the actual starting dates must be established by the Snohomish County Council upon request of the superior court and by recommendation of the Snohomish County Executive.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Snohomish County currently has a workload of 19 judges, and this bill authorizes them to have 15 judges. The actual starting dates must be determined by the Snohomish County Council.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Chuck Foster, Board for Judicial Administration.