

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5151

C 246 L 97
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Adjusting the jurisdictional amount for district courts.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Johnson, Heavey, McCaslin, Loveland, Snyder and Winsley.

Senate Committee on Law & Justice
House Committee on Law & Justice

Background: All civil causes of action for monetary damages under \$35,000 must be submitted to arbitration prior to hearing by the court. The maximum arbitration limit in superior court is \$35,000, and the current jurisdiction level in district court is \$25,000, including actions upon bonds. Proponents of this bill believe that if the jurisdiction limit of district court was the same as the arbitration limit in superior court, a litigant would have the alternative of pursuing his or her claim in either superior or district court.

It usually takes from one to two years to obtain a civil trial in superior court due to the heavy volume of cases. A trial can be obtained within six months in district court. There is support for raising the jurisdiction level of district court to provide litigants an option of pursuing their action in district court, provide a more expeditious resolution to their cases, and reduce the volume of cases handled by superior court.

Summary: The civil jurisdiction of district courts is \$35,000, including actions upon bonds.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 27, 1997