

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5036

As Reported By House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Adding a judge to the superior courts of Okanogan and Grant counties.

Sponsors: Senators McCaslin and Heavey; by request of Board for Judicial Administration.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 3/23/99, 4/1/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Creates a new judicial position in the superior court of Okanogan County.
- Creates a new judicial position in the superior court of Grant County.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Carrell, Republican Co-Chair; Constantine, Democratic Co-Chair; Hurst, Democratic Vice Chair; Lambert, Republican Vice Chair; Cox; Dickerson; Esser; Kastama; Lantz; Lovick; McDonald and Schindler.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

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.

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 the judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

New superior court positions are filled by gubernatorial appointment. The appointed judge must then stand for election at the next general election.

Summary of Bill:

The number of superior court judges in Okanogan County is increased from one to two. The additional position is conditioned upon the approval of Okanogan County and its agreement to pay the expenses associated with the position as provided by state law or the state constitution.

The number of superior court judges in Grant County is increased from two to three. The additional position is conditioned upon the approval of Grant County and its agreement to pay the expenses associated with the position as provided by state law or the state constitution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 16, 1999.

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

Testimony For: The two superior court judges in Grant County are currently handling the workload of four and one-half judges. The superior court judge in Okanogan County is currently handling the workload of two and one-half judges.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Chuck Foster, Board for Judicial Administration.