

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5037

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As Passed Senate, March 8, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to the court of appeals.

**Brief Description:** Creating a new court of appeals position for Pierce county.

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 1/15/99, 1/25/99 [DP].

Ways & Means: 2/10/99, 2/16/99 [DP].

Passed Senate, 3/8/99, 46-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Johnson, McCaslin, Roach, Thibaudeau, Zarelli.

**Staff:** Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, West, Winsley and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

**Background:** Since 1993 Division II of the Court of Appeals has continued to experience an increase in criminal and civil appeals. In 1997 there were 150 more filings than in 1993. Also, the number of superior court judges in the counties that appeal cases to Division II has increased since 1993. As more decisions are rendered in the trial court, the number of appeals continues to grow. Four more trial judges have been added to the trial courts in Division II, a fifth will be added October 1999, and state funding has been authorized for another new judge in both Lewis and Clark counties.

Over a year ago, each judge and commissioner in Division II agreed to increase workloads for a minimum of one year in an effort to eliminate the division's backlog of cases. The result is that a March 1997 backlog of 243 cases was completely eliminated by the summer of 1998.

Given future projections of workload, Division II is of the opinion that an additional judicial position is necessary.

**Summary of Bill:** An additional judicial position, effective July 1, 2000, is authorized for Division II of the Court of Appeals. The judgeship is added to Division 1, Pierce County.

At the general election held in November 2000, the voters are to select a person to fill the position for a six-year term.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Division II has made a major effort to increase efficiency and manage a large workload. But things have reached a point where we need a new judge. Additional superior court judge positions recently authorized will also increase the workload necessitating the need for an additional judge.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Judge C. C. Bridgewater, Court of Appeals; Judy Elaine Houghton, Court of Appeals.