

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6053

As of March 1, 1999

Title: An act relating to the impact of extraordinary criminal justice expenses on counties and cities.

Brief Description: Assisting counties and cities with extraordinary criminal justice expenses.

Sponsors: Senators Loveland, Morton, Snyder, Hale, Winsley, Oke and Kohl-Welles; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 3/2/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The state provides direct financial assistance to cities and counties for criminal justice programs through quarterly distributions from the Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account and the County Criminal Justice Assistance Account. The distributions are based on formulas using a variety of factors, including population, crime rate, and the number of criminal cases filed in each jurisdiction.

These distributions of criminal justice assistance for local governments were first established by the Legislature in 1990 from motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) revenues. In 1998, Referendum Bill 49 reduced MVET distributions for local criminal justice programs, but provided a net increase in assistance by directing annual General Fund transfers of \$23.2 million to the County Criminal Justice Assistance Account and \$9.2 million to the Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account. These two amounts are increased annually to reflect the fiscal growth factor under Initiative 601.

Summary of Bill: The Extraordinary Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account and the Extraordinary County Criminal Justice Assistance Account are established as new state treasury accounts for the purposes of providing reimbursement to cities and counties, respectively, for the extraordinary costs of investigation and adjudication of specific criminal cases that are found to impose disproportionate fiscal impact on a city or county. Disproportionate fiscal impact is determined by the Governor in consultation with the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties.

Each fiscal year, \$3 million is diverted from the County Criminal Justice Assistance Account to the Extraordinary County Criminal Justice Assistance Account, and \$1.2 million is diverted from the Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account to the Extraordinary Municipal Criminal Justice Assistance Account. At the end of each fiscal year, any amounts that have not been expended by the Governor for reimbursement of costs in extraordinary criminal cases are returned to the respective criminal justice assistance account.

Article II, section 1 of the state Constitution requires a two-thirds vote to amend an initiative or referendum within two years of its enactment. Because Referendum 49 was enacted in 1998, this bill will require a two-thirds vote for passage.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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