

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6154

---

As Passed Senate, February 8, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to giving the county clerk authorization to accept credit cards.

**Brief Description:** Allowing county clerks to accept credit cards.

**Sponsors:** Senators Costa, McCaslin, Patterson and Gardner.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 1/12/2000, 1/20/2000 [DP].  
Passed Senate, 2/8/2000, 45-1.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Haugen, Horn and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** The office of county clerk is an elected office provided for in the Washington State Constitution as is a duty of the county clerk to be the clerk of the superior court.

County treasurers are authorized by statute to accept credit cards and similar noncurrency forms of payment for any kind of payment due the county. The payer must bear the cost of processing the transaction in an amount determined by the treasurer. In no event may that cost exceed the additional costs so incurred by the county. The county legislative authority may waive the transaction cost when waiver would be in the best interests of the county.

**Summary of Bill:** County clerks are authorized to accept payment by credit card and similar noncurrency forms of payment of all fees and moneys collected by the clerk that are due the court for various filings and for services performed by the clerk's office incident to matters on file as well as other charges required by specified statutes. Also included in this authorization are payments of court-ordered fines, restitution and other moneys owed by criminal defendants. The payer must bear the cost of processing the transaction.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill will facilitate collections from criminals who wish to pay their fines and restitution by credit card. Collection of these monies has not been successful for the most part. The bill helps bring the courts up to date with new technology. Colorado is already accepting court filings made electronically. For Washington to be able to do this,

acceptance of an electronic form of paying the filing fee is needed. Clark County is currently hosting a pilot project with a vendor providing the service of accepting the credit card payment and providing a receipt to the card owner for the processing cost. The bill ensures the card owner paying by credit card pays any processing costs.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Betty Gould, President, Washington Association of County Clerks; Debbie Wilke, Washington Association of County Officials.

**House Amendment(s):** The House amendment references existing law applicable to deposits made by county treasurers and clerks.