

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6351

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2000

Title: An act relating to superior court commissioners.

Brief Description: Providing additional authority for superior court commissioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Kline, McCaslin, Heavey, Long, Shin, Thibaudeau, Sheahan and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/24/2000, 1/28/2000 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/14/2000, 37-4.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6351 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Karen Lundahl (786-7421)

Background: The superior court judges in any county are authorized to appoint superior court commissioners to assist in handling the work of the court. Such commissioners are able to hear probate matters, supplemental proceedings, adoptions, involuntary mental illness commitments, ex parte and uncontested civil matters, juvenile offender proceedings and enter default civil judgments. They are not now authorized to handle any phase of adult criminal cases.

Summary of Bill: The authority of superior court commissioners is expanded to allow commissioners to preside over a number of proceedings in adult criminal cases, including arraignments, preliminary appearances, probable cause determinations, appointment of counsel, review of conditions of release, waivers of speedy trial rights, continuances, and noncompliance proceedings pursuant to RCW 9.94A.200.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This will free up superior court judges to handle trials and will allow a more efficient use of judicial resources.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Judge Salvatore Cozza, Superior Court Judges Association (pro).