SENATE BILL REPORT

SSJR 8200

As Passed Senate, March 17, 1999

Brief Description: Requiring superior court judges to be admitted to the practice of law for a minimum of five years.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators McCaslin and Roach).

Brief History:
  Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/27/99, 2/8/99 [DPS, DNPS].
  Passed Senate, 3/17/99, 38-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Joint Resolution No. 8200 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint resolution do pass.
    Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Haugen, Long, McCaslin and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.
    Signed by Senator Roach.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

Background: Article IV, Section 17 of the Washington Constitution provides that a person cannot be a judge of the Supreme Court or of the superior court unless the person is admitted to the practice of law in this state. In addition, various state statutes require a person to be an attorney in this state to be a judge of the Court of Appeals, district court, or municipal court. Cities and counties with less than 5,000 population may have a non-lawyer serve as a judge if the person has passed a qualifying exam prescribed by rule of the Supreme Court.

Summary of Bill: The state Constitution is amended to provide that a person cannot hold the office of superior court judge unless he or she has been admitted to the practice of law for not less than five years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Upon approval by the voters at the next general election.

Testimony For: Not applicable, given the difference between the original bill and the substitute.

Testimony Against: Not applicable, given the difference between the original bill and the substitute.

Testified: Not applicable, given the difference between the original bill and the substitute.