

1663-S

Sponsor(s): House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Lambert, Constantine, McDonald, Kagi, Carrell, Edwards, Kastama and Santos)

Brief Title: Creating a unified family court.

HB 1663-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes the increased complexity of the problems facing family members and the increased complexity of the laws affecting families. It is believed that in such situations, an efficient and effective response is through the creation of a unified court system centered around the family that: Provides a dedicated, trained, and informed judiciary; incorporates case management practices based on a family's judicial system needs; enables multiple case type resolution by one judicial officer or judicial team; provides coordinated legal and social services; and considers and evaluates the needs of the family as a whole.

Provides for a pilot project for a report to the legislature on the effectiveness of the program.

Provides that pilot program sites shall be selected through a request for proposal process, and shall be established in no more than three superior court judicial districts.

Provides that, to be eligible for consideration as a pilot project site, judicial districts must have a statutorily authorized judicial complement of at least five judges.

Directs the office of the administrator for the courts to conduct a study of the pilot program measuring improvements in the judicial system's response to family involvement in the judicial system. The administrator for the courts shall report preliminary findings and final results of the study to the governor, the chief justice of the supreme court, and the legislature on a biennial basis. The initial report is due by July 1, 2000, and the final report is due by December 1, 2004.

Increases fees for jury trial demands and for requests for trial de novo of an arbitration award.