

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1081

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to jury service.

Brief Description: Restricting the length of the term of jury service.

Sponsors: Representatives Carrell and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 1/25/01, 2/22/01 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Allows a juror to be excused for cause from any remaining jury term after two days of service or completion of one trial.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Carrell, Republican Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Co-Chair; Hurst, Democratic Vice Chair; Lambert, Republican Vice Chair; Boldt, Casada, Esser and Lovick.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Dickerson and McDermott.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background:

A person summoned by any trial court for jury duty is required to be available for up to one month to report for jury service. This one month on-call period is known as the "*jury term*." During that one-month jury term, the person summoned may be required to report to the court house. The period of time that the person must spend at the court house is known as the period of "*juror service*."

With one exception, the period of juror service:

- may not extend beyond the end of the one-month jury term; and
- may not exceed two weeks.

These two limitations on the period of juror service may be exceeded if necessary to complete a trial to which the person has been assigned as a juror.

The Board for Judicial Administration created a "Washington State Jury Commission" to find ways to improve rates of response to jury summons and to accommodate persons called for jury duty. Based in part on the work done by that commission, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts is recommending changes to the authorized period of juror service.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The court may excuse a juror from any remaining jury term once he or she has completed a trial or two days of service.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill would have reduced the maximum period of juror service from two weeks or one trial to two days or one trial.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The national standard for jury service is actually one day or one trial. However, since some Washington counties are already using two days or one trial, the Board for Judicial Administration is recommending that as the rule in this state. The current system keeps people on call– for too long and is a disincentive for people to serve.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Judge Daniel Berschauer, Board for Judicial Administration.