

Judiciary

HB 1275

Title: *An act relating to the administrator for the courts.*

Brief Description: *Changing provisions relating to the administrator for the courts.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Lantz and Esser; by request of Administrator for the Courts.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Instructs the Administrator for the Courts (administrator) to periodically assess unmet civil legal needs of low-income people in the state.*
- *Instructs the administrator to administer state funds that may be appropriated for improving the operation of the courts and to provide support for court coordinating councils.*
- *Appropriates \$500,000 for the Office of Administrator for the Courts, under the direction of the Board for Judicial Administration, for the support of court coordinating council planning activities.*
- *Removes the requirement that the administrator not be over 60 at the time of appointment and the prohibition that prevents the administrator and assistants employed in the office from practicing law.*

Hearing Date: *2/1/01*

Staff: *Christopher Waraksa (786-5793); Edie Adams (786-7180).*

Background:

Project 2001 Committee: *The Project 2001 Committee was formed by the Board for*

Judicial Administration to pursue long-range court reform. The committee was charged to review current problems with the court system and recommend solutions. The committee recommended assigning new duties to the Office of the Administrator for the Courts and the creation of the court coordinating councils.

Administrator for the Courts: *The Administrator for the Courts (administrator) is appointed by the Washington State Supreme Court from a list of five persons submitted by the Governor. The administrator, under the supervision and direction of the Chief Justice, is charged with administering many and various aspects of the state court system, such as fostering court efficiency, training personnel, designing forms, developing standards, and controlling costs. Neither the administrator nor his assistants may practice law during their tenure with the Office of the Administrator for the Courts. In addition, the administrator may not be over the age of 60 when appointed to office.*

Court Coordinating Councils: *The final report of the Project 2001 Committee calls on the Board for Judicial Administration to promote the establishment of court coordination councils. These broadly based trial court coordination councils will be formed in each jurisdiction, composed of trial court judges, clerks, court administrators, lawyers, citizens, and other local officials. They are to work toward maximum utilization of judicial and other court resources by first developing and then implementing comprehensive trial court coordination plans.*

Summary of Bill:

The administrator is instructed to periodically assess unmet civil legal needs of low-income people in the state, to administer state funds that may be appropriated for improving the operation of the courts, and to provide support for court coordinating councils. The sum of \$500,000 is appropriated to the Office of the Administrator for the Courts, under the direction of the Board for Judicial Administration, solely for the support of court coordinating council planning activities.

The requirement that an administrator not be over 60 at the time of appointment and the prohibition that prevents an administrator and assistants employed in the office from practicing law are removed.

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

Appropriation: *The Sum of \$500,00 from the Public Safety and Education Account.*

Fiscal Note: *Available.*