

Judiciary Committee

HB 1757

Title: *An act relating to law libraries.*

Brief Description: *Permitting law library services through online electronic research tools.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Carrell and Anderson.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires the State Library to investigate possible provision of on-line electronic legal research services through the county law libraries.*
- *Allows the State Library to enter into a contract for such services if the State Library concludes such a contract would improve delivery of legal research services.*
- *Allows counties to contract with the State Library for those services and to charge a fee to library patrons.*

Hearing Date: *2/16/01*

Staff: *Bill Perry (786-7123).*

Background:

Each county with a population of 8,000 or more is required to maintain a county law library. The library is governed by a board of trustees. Smaller counties may have a law library which is run by the prosecuting attorney. Counties may also join to form a regional law library. In a county where a library is required, a "suitable" room with adequate heat, light, and janitorial services must be provided by the county. In a county of 300,000 population or more, the law library must be free to all users. In smaller counties, libraries must be free for judges, county officials, lawyers, and any others as determined by the law library board.

Funding for law libraries is through portions of the civil filing fees in superior and district courts. Twelve dollars of every new probate or civil filing fee collected in superior court

and \$6 of every civil filing fee collected in district court is to be used for the support of the county law library. Upon approval of the library board of trustees and the county legislative authority, the fee in superior court may be increased to \$15.

Summary of Bill:

The State Library is directed to investigate the possibility of contracting for on-line electronic legal research services to be provided to county law libraries.

If the State Library determines such a contract would improve delivery of county law library services, the State Library may enter into a contract with a vendor. Any county may then contract with the State Library for those same services.

County law libraries may charge patrons for the use of any on-line services provided for under such a contract.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested February 14, 2001.*

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