

***Judiciary***

***HJR 4203***

***Brief Description:*** Amending the Constitution to provide for election of supreme court justices from three judicial districts.

***Sponsors:*** Representatives Schindler, Cox, Carrell, Crouse, Ahern, Boldt and B. Chandler

***Brief Summary of Bill***

*Makes the following amendments to the state constitution:*

- *Requires supreme court justices to be elected from three supreme court judicial districts.*
- *Requires each justice to be a resident for at least one year of the supreme court judicial district for which he or she is elected or appointed.*
- *Establishes three supreme court judicial districts and requires the Secretary of State to assign by lot each supreme court judicial position to a supreme court judicial district.*

***Hearing Date:*** 2/6/01

***Staff:*** Edie Adams (786-7180).

***Background:***

*The state constitution and statutory law govern the composition and election of the justices of the state supreme court. There are nine justices of the supreme court, as set by statute.*

*Article IV, Section 3 of the state constitution provides for the justices of the supreme court to be elected by the voters on a statewide basis. Three justices are elected at each biennial general election for a term of six years. A vacancy in a supreme court position is filled by appointment by the Governor until the next general election. The justice elected at the next general election holds office for the remainder of the unexpired term.*

*An amendment to the Washington Constitution requires passage by the Legislature by two-thirds vote of each house and approval by a majority of the voters of the state at the next general election.*

***Summary of Bill:***

*Article IV, Section 3 of the state constitution is amended to require supreme court justices to be elected from three supreme court judicial districts. A vacancy that occurs on the supreme court must be filled with a person who is a resident of the supreme court judicial district for which the vacancy occurs. Each justice must be a resident of the supreme court judicial district for which he or she is elected or appointed for at least one year at the time of election or appointment. The Secretary of State must assign by lot each supreme court judicial position to a supreme court judicial district as provided in statute.*

*Three justices must be elected from each of the three supreme court judicial districts. The three supreme court judicial districts are established as follows and may be changed by the Legislature by statute:*

- District 1: King, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom counties.*
- District 2: Pierce, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Thurston, Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties.*
- District 3: Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Adams, Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Walla Walla, Whitman, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties.*

*The provisions of this act are to be submitted to the voters at the next general election for approval and ratification or for rejection.*

***Appropriation: None.***

***Fiscal Note: Requested February 2, 2001.***