

Judiciary Committee

SSB 5070

Title: *An act relating to jury service.*

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

Sponsors: *By Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Kline, McCaslin, Franklin, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Fraser, Patterson, Fairley and Winsley).*

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- *The length of time a juror is required to serve is reduced from the current period of two weeks or one trial, whichever is longer, to a period of two days or one trial, whichever is longer.*

Hearing Date: *3/20/01*

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

Background:

State law sets the maximum periods of time for jury duty. Some local jurisdictions use shorter periods.

The current statutory maximum periods are two weeks, or one trial, within one month.

A person summoned by any trial court for jury duty is required to be available for not more than 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 Bill:

The maximum period of juror service is changed to two days during a one-month jury term. The two-day period may be exceeded only in order to complete a trial.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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