

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5070

As Passed Senate, March 7, 2001

Title: An act relating to jury service.

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

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/23/01, 1/29/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/7/01, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5070 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Costa, Hargrove, Johnson, Kastama, Long, McCaslin, Roach, Thibaudeau and Zarelli.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: Jury term is the time period during which summoned jurors must be available to report for jury service and currently that time period is set at one or more days, not to exceed one month. Washington statutes define jury service— to mean the period of time a juror is required to be present at the court facility. This period of time may not extend beyond the end of the jury term, and may not exceed two weeks within that term, except to complete a trial which the juror was assigned during the two-week period.

Proponents of this bill, including the Board for Judicial Administration, believe shortening the time potential jurors are required to be present at the court facility will reduce the hardship associated with service and the need for exemptions or excuses will be reduced as well.

Summary of Bill: The maximum amount of time that jurors must be present at the court facility may not exceed two days during any jury term, except to complete a trial to which the juror was assigned.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The Board for Judicial Administration supports this proposal. This bill would implement what many counties already do. Limiting jury service to two days will allow more people to have the experience of serving on a jury.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dan Berschauer, Board of Judicial Administration; Dean Logan, Kitsap County Clerk; Teri Nielsen, Cowlitz County Clerk.

House Amendment(s): The period of time for juror service may not extend beyond the end of the jury term and may not exceed two weeks except to complete a trial. A juror may be excused for cause after one trial or two days of service.