

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5786

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As of February 7, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to qualifications of judges.

**Brief Description:** Revising qualifications for the court of appeals.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kline, Sheahan, Kohl-Welles and Prentice.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/8/01.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Staff:** Lilah Amos (786-7421)

**Background:** The Washington State Constitution provides that a Court of Appeals be established by statute. The Legislature has created a Court of Appeals system, including a statutory requirement that Court of Appeals judges be admitted to the practice of law in Washington for five years before taking office.

A constitutional amendment (SJR 8212) has been proposed which specifies minimum terms for admission to the practice of law for judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and superior court. The amendment contains a ten-year practice requirement for judges of the Court of Appeals, which is inconsistent with the current statutory requirement that judges of the Court of Appeals be admitted to the practice law in Washington for five years.

**Summary of Bill:** A judge of the Court of Appeals must be admitted to the practice of law in Washington for ten years prior to taking office. If a judge holding office at the effective date of this act does not meet the minimum qualification, that judge is permitted to complete his or her current term of office. If the constitutional amendment concerning qualifications of judges is not ratified by the voters, this act is null and void.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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