

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6293

C 59 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Hearing certain criminal actions by video or other electronic means.

Sponsors: Senators Kline and Johnson.

Senate Committee on Judiciary
House Committee on Judiciary

Background: In criminal prosecutions in district courts, a case must generally be brought where the alleged violation occurred. Certain exceptions exist to this rule, including that district court cases may be heard by video or electronic means if the defendant has violated a local ordinance and is located outside of the court's geographic jurisdiction or boundaries. District courts have jurisdiction over local criminal ordinances and over misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor violations of state law.

The District and Municipal Court Judges' Association recommends that the district courts' authority to hear cases by video or electronic means be extended to cases involving defendants who have violated a state criminal statute. Concern exists that district courts may be limited to hearing only those cases involving municipal ordinance violations by video conferencing methods. It has been reported that broader authority to conduct electronic or video hearings would reduce costs in transporting detained defendants charged with misdemeanor offenses to courthouses within courts' geographic jurisdiction or boundaries and facilitate hearings during instances of natural disaster or civil disorder.

Summary: Video or electronic hearings for criminal statute violations may be done in district courts if the defendant is located outside the courts' geographic jurisdiction or boundaries.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47 0
House	93 0

Effective: June 13, 2002