

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6458

As Passed Senate, February 18, 2002

Title: An act relating to jury fees.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to jury fees.

Sponsors: Senators Long and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/28/02, 2/7/02 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/18/02, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: A person who requests a jury in a civil trial in district or municipal court is required to pay a jury demand fee of \$50. A person who is convicted by a jury in a criminal trial in district court is charged a \$25 jury fee.

In superior court, a person making a demand for a jury of six in a civil action is required to pay a fee of \$125 and for a jury of 12, the fee is \$250. In superior court criminal cases, the fee for a jury of six is \$50 and for a jury of 12, the fee is \$100.

There is concern that jury demand fees vary widely even though the same fees must be paid to jurors and staff regardless of whether the jury trial takes place in superior court or district court. For example, for a jury of 12, a jury panel of approximately 35 people must be brought in and paid a minimum of \$10 per day, plus mileage. This does not include costs related to staff time.

Summary of Bill: The district court and municipal court civil and criminal jury demand fee is \$125. The jury demand fee for criminal cases in superior court is \$125 for a jury of six and \$250 for a jury of 12.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The cost for calling a jury is not now being covered by the jury fee demands. We have found out that even criminal defendants are able to pay for their juries. There is no jury fee if the defendant is indigent and also, it is only imposed if the defendant is found guilty. This bill makes the jury demand fees consistent.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Betty Gould, Thurston County Clerk; Ken Kunes, Grant County Clerk; Debbie Wilke, WA Assn. of County Officials.