

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1292

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, March 28, 2003

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Authorizing additional superior court judicial positions.

Sponsors: Representatives Rockefeller, Delvin, Grant, Moeller, Hankins, Hinkle, Mastin, Eickmeyer, Orcutt, Wallace, Fromhold, Haigh, Holmquist, McMahan and Woods; by request of Administrative Office of the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 3/28/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Esser, Vice Chair; Brandland, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Kline, Roach and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. The Administrative Office of the Courts periodically performs an objective workload analysis to determine the need for additional judicial positions in the various counties. The current analysis indicates a need for: an additional three judicial officers in Clark County; one additional judicial officer in Kitsap County; .2 additional judicial officers in Kittitas County; and 1.4 additional judicial officers in Benton/Franklin County.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary of a superior court judge are paid by the state as provided by the Washington State Constitution Article 4, Section 13. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Summary of Bill: Superior court judicial positions are increased in several counties as follows:

- Clark County - from eight to ten;
- Kitsap County - from seven to eight;
- Kittitas County - from one to two; and
- Benton/Franklin County - from five to six.

Effective dates for each of the new judicial positions are provided, but the actual starting dates are established by the county's legislative authority upon request of the superior court and recommendation of the county executive authority. The judicial positions are effective

only if the county legislative authority of each county documents its approval and agrees to pay the county's share of the expenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Analysis shows an unmet need for these additional judges leading to delayed justice in these counties. Benton and Franklin counties have experienced a dramatic increase in case loads since the last increase in the number of superior court judges.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Rockefeller; Senator Hale.