

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5241

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As Passed Senate, March 4, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to district court judges.

**Brief Description:** Creating additional district court judge positions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fraser, Swecker, Rockefeller, Rasmussen, Sheldon and Oke; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 1/26/05, 2/3/05 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/4/05, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Esser, Hargrove, McCaslin, Rasmussen and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Cindy Fazio (786-7405)

**Background:** Clark County has six district judge positions. The last position was authorized in 2003 but was not phased in by the county within two years of authorization as allowed by statute. Kitsap County has three district judges. Thurston County has two district judges.

**Summary of Bill:** Clark County's sixth district judge position is recreated as of the effective date of this bill. Clark County has another two year period to agree to the funding of the position and fill the position. Kitsap County's number of judges is increased from three to four. Thurston County's number of judges is increased from two to three.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** The workload analysis for Kitsap County District Court recommends 4.27 judicial officers; this bill brings the number to 4. The county commissioners and all delegates support the bill. The caseload has increased from 26,000 annually to over 40,000. The complexity of the cases has increased with advances in science. The county will be better able to enforce court ordered programs. The county is remodeling facilities to accommodate the additional position. The workload analysis for Thurston County District Court recommends 3.9 judicial officers; this bill brings the number to 3. The court has taken many steps to

improve efficiency with an informative website with forms; some matters are handled via email; there are drop boxes, and public access terminals.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Judge Marilyn Paja, Kitsap County District Court; Judge Kip Stiliz, Thurston County District Court.