Washington State
House of Representatives
Office of Program Research

BILL ANALYSIS

Judiciary Committee

HB 2762

Title: An act relating to changing the number of district court judges.

Brief Description: Increasing the number of district court judges in Cowlitz county.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko, Blake, Orcutt and Herrera; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the number of district court judges in Cowlitz County from two to three.

Hearing Date: 1/22/08

Staff: Lara Zarowsky (786-7123).

Background:

The number of district court judges in each county is set by statute. Any change in the number of full and part-time judicial positions in a county's district court is determined by the Legislature after receiving a recommendation from the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court's recommendation is based on an objective workload analysis developed annually by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which takes into account available judicial resources and the caseload activity of the court. The AOC may consult with the Board of Judicial Administration and the District and Municipal Court Judge's Association to develop procedures and methods to apply the objective workload analysis.

Changes in the number of district court judges may not be made in a year in which judicial elections for district court are held.

The AOC completes a judicial impact note, which identifies any cost to the state or local government, for each recommendation to vary the number of district court judges in a county. In order for an additional judicial position to become effective, the legislative authority of the

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affected county must approve the position and agree to pay, out of county funds and without reimbursement from the state, expenses associated with the new position.

Cowlitz County has two elected district court judges. An increase to at least three district court judicial positions is justified according to the AOC's objective workload analysis.

Summary of Bill:

The number of statutorily authorized district court judges is increased in Cowlitz County from two to three.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/17/08.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.