

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1159

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As of March 25, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to increasing the number of superior court judges in Whatcom county.

**Brief Description:** Increasing the number of superior court judges in Whatcom county.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lytton, Buys, Morris and Ryu; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/09/13, 89-8.

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 3/25/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Staff:** Jessica Stevenson (786-7465)

**Background:** The number of superior court judges in Washington counties is authorized by statute. The Administrator for the Courts examines the need for new superior court judge positions under an objective workload analysis. The analysis is a statistical model based on workload. The two key components in the analysis are the processed caseload and the number of available judicial officers. Once the analysis is complete, the Board for Judicial Administration reviews the results and makes recommendations to the Legislature.

Article 4, section 13 of the Washington State Constitution provides that the state and the county share the cost for superior court judges. A superior court judge's benefits and one half of the salary are paid by the state. The county pays one-half of the judge's salary.

Currently, Whatcom County has three superior court judges.

**Summary of Bill:** An additional judicial position is created in Whatcom County, changing the number of superior court judges from three to four. The addition of this judicial position is contingent on Whatcom County documenting its approval of the position by the county legislative authority, and agreeing that Whatcom County pay for the expenses of the position without compensation from the state.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

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

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: It has been 40 years since a superior court judicial position was added. There is a need in Whatcom County for an additional superior court judge.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Judge Charles Snyder, Whatcom County Superior Court; Mellani McAllenan, Board for Judicial Administration.