

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1610

C 7 L 15
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing jury service provisions.

Sponsors: House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives McCaslin, Riccelli, Rodne, Orwall, Holy, Stokesbary, G. Hunt, Taylor and Shea).

House Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Law & Justice

Background:

Juries.

A jury is a body of persons temporarily selected from the qualified inhabitants of a particular district and invested with the power to present or indict a person for a public offense or try a question of fact. Jurors are randomly selected from a jury source list made up of the list of registered voters, licensed drivers, and identocard holders in each county. A person is qualified to be a juror if he or she is a United States citizen over the age of 18, is a resident of the county of service, is able to communicate in English, and has not been convicted of a felony.

Jury Service.

The court sets the length and number of jury terms within a 12-month period, subject to statutory parameters for jury terms and service.

The "jury term" is the period of time during which summoned jurors must be available to report for jury service. The jury term may be one or more days, not to exceed one month. The term of "juror service" is the period of time a juror is required to be present at the court facility. The period of juror service may not extend beyond the jury term, and may not exceed two weeks, except to complete a trial to which the juror was assigned during the two-week period.

The statutorily stated policy of the state is to maximize the availability of residents of the state for jury service, and to minimize the burden resulting from jury service on prospective jurors and their families and employers. The jury term and jury service should be set at as brief an interval as is practical given the size of the jury source list for the judicial district.

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.

The optimal jury term is two weeks or less. Optimal juror service is one day or one trial, whichever is longer.

Excusal from Jury Service.

The court may excuse a person from jury service upon a showing of undue hardship, extreme inconvenience, public necessity, or any reason deemed sufficient by the court for a period of time the court deems necessary. A prospective juror excused from juror service for a particular time may be assigned to another jury term. When the jury source list has been fully summoned and additional jurors are needed, jurors who have already served may be summoned again for service. A juror who has previously served may be excused if he or she served at least two weeks of juror service within the preceding 12 months.

Summary:

The maximum jury term and maximum period of jury service are shortened in counties with a jury source list of at least 70,000 names. The jury term is shortened from one or more days, not exceeding one month to one or more days, not exceeding two weeks. The term of jury service is shortened from up to two weeks to up to one week.

In all counties, the optimal jury term is shortened to one week or less. A juror who is summoned for jury service after having already served within the previous 12 months qualifies for excusal if he or she has served at least one week of juror service during that preceding 12 months.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: July 24, 2015