
Judiciary Committee

SSB 5989

Title: An act relating to small claims court.

Brief Description: Concerning small claims court.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senator Padden).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases the jurisdiction of the small claims department in each district court from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Hearing Date: 2/9/18

Staff: Nate Hickner (786-7290) and Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Within each district court is a small claims department which has nonexclusive jurisdiction over cases for the recovery of money only if the amount claimed does not exceed \$5,000. In small claims cases, formal pleadings are not required, and hearings and dispositions are conducted informally with the sole object of dispensing speedy justice between the litigants. Each party in a small claims case is usually self-represented, and attorneys are not allowed to participate unless the judge grants permission.

Generally, any individual, business, partnership, or corporation may bring a small claims suit against any other individual, business, partnership, or corporation. Small claims usually must be filed in the district court of the county in which the defendant resides. Appeals may be taken to the superior court, but no party may appeal a judgment where the amount claimed is less than \$250, and the party who filed the claim may not appeal unless the amount claimed exceeds \$1,000.

Summary of Bill:

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 jurisdiction of the small claims department in each district court is increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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