

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5575

As of January 12, 2022

Title: An act relating to adding additional superior court judges in Snohomish county.

Brief Description: Adding additional superior court judges in Snohomish county.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, Robinson, Das, Lias, Padden, Salomon, Stanford and Wellman; by request of Administrative Office of the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/13/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates two additional superior court positions for Snohomish County.
- Requires the county legislative authority to document their approval and agreement to pay for the positions to be effective.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Tim Ford (786-7423)

Background: The number of superior court judges in each county is set by statute. Any change in the number of full and part-time judges in a county's superior court is determined by the Legislature after receiving a recommendation from the Board for Judicial Administration (BJA). The BJA recommendation is based on an objective workload analysis developed annually by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The objective workload analysis takes into account available judicial resources and the caseload activity of the court.

Superior court judges and court commissioners hear felony and other criminal matters, civil matters, domestic relations matters, guardianship and probate matters, juvenile matters as

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well as child dependency cases, appeals from lower courts, and appeals from state administrative agencies. The Washington State Constitution provides that the state and 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. For an additional judicial position to become effective, the legislative authority of the 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.

Snohomish County has 15 superior court judges.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Two additional judicial positions are created for Snohomish County, changing the number of superior court judges from 15 to 17. The additional judicial position is effective only if the Snohomish County legislative authority documents its approval of the positions and agrees to pay for the expenses of the additional positions without compensation from the state. The positions would then be created on July 1, 2022.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 6, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2022.