

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2049

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to superior courts.

Brief Description: Authorizing Spokane county to add one additional superior court judge.

Sponsors: Representatives Sheahan, Padden, Appelwick and Dellwo; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 2/2/96 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; Delvin, Vice Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Dellwo, Ranking Minority Member; Costa, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Carrell; Chappell; Cody; Lambert; McMahan; Morris; Murray; Robertson; Smith; Sterk and Veloria.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts conducts a weighted caseload study to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. Currently, Spokane County has 10 judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the Administrator for the Courts indicates a need, as of 1995, for 17.56 judges in the county.

Retirement system benefits and one-half of the salary of a superior court judge are paid by the state. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Two of the three Spokane County Commissioners have indicated, by letter dated January 10, 1996, their support for an additional judicial position.

Summary of Bill: The number of superior court judges in Spokane County is increased from 10 to 11.

The new position becomes effective only if the legislative authority of Spokane County agrees that the county will pay its share of the cost of the position without reimbursement from the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The weighted caseload analysis shows the need for this position, and the county has indicated its support for it.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Chuck Foster, Office of the Administrator for the Courts (pro).