

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2236

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Providing two superior court positions for Thurston county.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Wolfe and Romero; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/16/96, 1/19/96 [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, Thurston County has six judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the Administrator for the Courts indicates a need, as of 1995, for 9.25 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.

Summary of Bill: The number of superior court judges in Thurston County is increased from six to eight. One of the new judicial positions will take effect July 1, 1996, and the other July 1, 2000.

The new positions become effective only if the legislative authority of Thurston County agrees that the county will pay its share of the cost of the positions without reimbursement from the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains the following effective dates: one judicial position created by section 1 shall be effective July 1, 1996; the second position shall be effective July 1, 2000.

Testimony For: Thurston County's population and court workload growth more than justify the need for the additional judicial positions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Judge Richard Strophy, Thurston County Superior Court (pro); and Kurt Sharar, Washington State Association of Counties (pro).