

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5040

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Operations

Title: An act relating to district court districting committee.

Brief Description: Prescribing the selection process for district court districting committees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 3/31/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; L. Thomas, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chopp; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; D. Schmidt; Sommers; Van Luven and Wolfe.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: Counties operate district courts which, together with municipal courts, serve as courts of limited jurisdiction. These courts may conduct trials for misdemeanors, traffic offenses, "small claims," and other civil claims of limited monetary value. When population and workload require, counties may establish two or more geographical districts for district courts.

The establishment and revision of these district boundaries is done by a districting committee composed of one superior court judge, the prosecuting attorney or deputy, a practicing lawyer, a judge of a court of limited jurisdiction, the chair of the county legislative authority, the county auditor, and the mayors or their representatives from each city or town with a population of 3,000 or more. Additionally, representatives of cities and towns with a population of less than 3,000 are appointed as follows:

- (1) If there is a city in the county with a population of 10,000 or more, a person is selected by the president of the Association of Washington Cities to represent all cities and towns with a population of less than 3,000. Twenty-two counties in the state currently fall into this category; or
- (2) If there is no city in the county with a population of 10,000 or more, the mayors or their representatives from each city and town with a population of less than 3,000 are members of the committee. Seventeen counties in the state currently fall into this category.

Summary of Bill: When forming a county district court redistricting committee in a county in which there is a city with a population of 10,000 or more, the representative of cities and towns with populations of less than 3,000 is selected by a majority vote of the mayors of those cities and towns, rather than by the president of the Association of Washington Cities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The president of the Association of Washington Cities may not know anyone in the county to appoint. It is more appropriate for the mayors to make this appointment.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.