

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5956

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

**Title:** An act relating to collection of unpaid court-ordered legal financial obligations.

**Brief Description:** Collecting unpaid court obligations.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen, Strannigan, Rinehart, Hargrove, Smith, Schow, Prentice, Hochstatter, Wojahn, Haugen, Sheldon, Gaspard, Deccio, Spanel, Morton, Pelz, Franklin, Bauer, Kohl, Sutherland, Palmer, McDonald, Wood, A. Anderson, Owen, McAuliffe, Fraser, Long, West, Oke and Winsley.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 3/31/95 [DPA].

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; Delvin, Vice Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Appelwick, Ranking Minority Member; Costa, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Carrell; Chappell; Cody; Lambert; McMahan; Morris; Robertson; Smith; Thibaudeau and Veloria.

**Staff:** Pat Shelledy (786-7149).

**Background:** Superior court clerks may contract with collection agencies to collect unpaid court obligations. The term "court obligations" is not defined in statute. The debtor must pay the collection costs. If the debtor is a criminal defendant under the Department of Correction's jurisdiction, counties may only use a collection agency if the department agrees.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The term "court obligations" is defined to mean legal financial obligations that may be imposed under the felony or misdemeanor conviction. Those obligations include restitution, victims' compensation fees, court costs, county or interlocal drug fund fines, court-appointed attorneys' fees, costs of defense, fines, and any other financial obligation that is assessed to the offender.

The superior court may assess the costs of collection as court costs at sentencing or at any time within 10 years.

Superior court clerks are encouraged to use collection agencies for defendants under the department's supervision with the department's approval.

Contracts with collection agencies may specify the scope of work, remuneration, and other appropriate charges.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** A technical amendment clarifies that the court may use collection agencies to collect fines and other obligations ordered pursuant to a misdemeanor conviction not just a felony conviction.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill will clarify the meaning of "court obligations."

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Rasmussen, prime sponsor (pro).