

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6495

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Creating two additional superior court positions for Chelan and Douglas counties jointly.

Sponsors: Senators Smith and Sellar; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 2/23/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; Delvin, Vice Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Dellwo, Ranking Minority Member; Costa, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Chappell; Cody; Lambert; McMahan; Morris; Robertson; Smith; Sterk and Veloria.

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

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, Chelan and Douglas counties jointly have three judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the Administrator for the Courts indicates a need, as of 1995, for 4.53 judges in the counties. Spokane County currently has 10 superior court judges. The weighted caseload analysis indicates a need, as of 1995, for 17.56 judges in the county.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary of a superior court judge is 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 Amended Bill: The number of superior court positions in Chelan and Douglas counties is increased from three to five. Both additional judicial positions will take effect January 1, 1997.

The new judicial positions become effective only if the legislative authorities of Chelan and Douglas counties jointly agree that the counties will pay their share of the cost of the positions without reimbursement from the state.

The number of superior court positions in Spokane County is increased from 10 to 11. The additional position takes effect February 1, 1997.

The new judicial 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill did not provide for increasing the number of superior court judges in Spokane County.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.