

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2236

As Passed House:

February 7, 1996

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

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

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by 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];

Appropriations: 2/3/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/7/96, 97-0.

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).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Carlson; Chappell; Cooke; Crouse; Dellwo; Dyer; Foreman; Grant; Hargrove; Hickel; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Wolfe.

Staff: Jim Lux (786-7152).

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 February 1, 1997, 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 February 1, 1997; the second position shall be effective July 1, 2000.

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

(Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Law & Justice) None.

(Appropriations) None.

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

(Appropriations) None.