

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2446

---

C 208 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

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

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representative Foreman; by request of Administrator for the Courts).

**House Committee on Law & Justice**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Law & Justice**

**Background:** The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) conducts a weighted caseload study to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties.

Chelan and Douglas counties jointly have three judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the OAC indicates a need, as of 1995, for 4.53 judges in the counties.

Spokane County has 10 judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the OAC indicates a need, as of 1995, for 17.56 judges in the county.

Thurston County has six judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the OAC indicates a need, as of 1995, for 9.25 judges in the county.

Retirement 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.

In 1992, the Legislature authorized 12 new superior court positions in King County. The county was authorized to phase in the filling of the new positions over time, but not beyond July 1, 1996. As of 1996, King County has filled three of the 12 authorized superior court positions.

**Summary:** The number of superior court judicial positions in Chelan and Douglas counties is increased from three to five. Both additional judicial positions will take effect February 1, 1997.

The number of superior court judicial positions in Spokane County is increased from 10 to 11.

The number of superior court judicial positions in Thurston County is increased from 6 to 8. One of the new Thurston County judicial positions is effective July 1, 1996, and the other Thurston County judicial position is effective July 1, 2000.

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

The July 1, 1996, deadline for filling currently authorized King County superior court positions is removed.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	95	0	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	88	0	(House concurred)

**Effective:** June 6, 1996