SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6179

As Passed Senate, February 10, 1996

Title: An act relating to impanelling juries.

Brief Description: Revising the procedure for impanelling juries.

Sponsors: Senator Smith; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:
   Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/18/96, 1/24/96 [DP].
   Passed Senate, 2/10/96, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

   Majority Report: Do pass.
      Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

   Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

   Background: Few courts follow the procedure in the Revised Code of Washington for selecting a jury. Many courts, especially the ones in larger counties, use automated systems. For King County superior court and downtown district court, approximately 250 people are called in every day, four days a week, to serve as jurors. A computer randomizes the names and selects a certain number to go to each courtroom. Current law requires a clerk to put the names of jurors on separate ballots, deposit them in a box, and then draw the names of the required number of people. This system is considered archaic and time consuming.

   This bill will conform the code to Criminal Rule 6.3, which was amended in 1993.

   Summary of Bill: Jurors are selected at random from a pool of jurors that is summoned. A preliminary examination of prospective jurors is conducted to determine their competence or suitability.

   Appropriation: None.

   Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

   Testimony For: The superior court judges support this bill. It will conform the code to what is occurring at the courthouses.

   Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Gil Austin, Office of the Administrator for the Courts (pro).