

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1210

As Reported By House Committee On:
Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to civil jurisdiction of district courts.

Brief Description: Adjusting the jurisdictional amount for district courts.

Sponsors: Representatives Sheahan, Appelwick, Robertson, Kessler, Romero, Wensman and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/31/97, 2/14/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz and Sherstad.

Staff: Trudes Hutcheson (786-7384).

Background: Generally, district courts have jurisdiction over civil cases if the value of the claim or the amount at issue does not exceed \$25,000, exclusive of interest, costs, and attorneys' fees. RCW 3.66.020. District courts do not have jurisdiction over civil actions involving title to real property, actions for the foreclosure of a mortgage or enforcement of a lien on real estate, and actions for false imprisonment, libel, slander, malicious prosecution, criminal conversation, or seduction. RCW 3.66.030.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The jurisdictional amount over civil cases in district court is raised from \$25,000 to \$35,000. A district court also has the option of raising its civil jurisdictional amount to \$50,000. The district court's civil jurisdiction is concurrent with the superior court.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Both bills raise the jurisdictional amount from \$25,000 to \$35,000. The substitute bill provides the option for district courts to raise that amount to \$50,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Increasing the district court civil jurisdiction will increase the number of civil cases the court can hear, and decrease the backlog of cases in superior court. Allowing more civil cases in district court will help civil litigants get to trial faster.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Judge Steve Dwyer, Washington District and Municipal Court Judges Association (pro, with suggested amendments); and Larry Shannon, Washington State Trial Lawyers Association (pro).