

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2292

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to the supervision of municipal court probation services.

Brief Description: Revising supervision of municipal court probation services.

Sponsors: Representatives Sheahan, Constantine, Benson and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/14/98, 1/20/98 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz; Mulliken; Robertson and Sherstad.

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background: Probation services are provided by courts for criminal offenders who are placed in the community. Statutes governing municipal courts in cities with a population of over 400,000 (Seattle) require the judges of the municipal court to appoint a director of probation services to supervise the probation officers of the municipal court. The director of probation services performs this duty under the direction and supervision of the presiding judge of the municipal court.

The presiding judge is responsible for administration of the court and assignment of calendars to all departments of the court. The presiding judge is elected by a majority vote of the municipal court judges for a term of one year.

The court administrator of the municipal court acts under the supervision and control of the presiding judge and is responsible for the supervision of the functions of the chief clerk of the court and the director of the city's traffic violations bureau. In addition, the court administrator is responsible for performing other duties assigned to him or her by the presiding judge. The court administrator is appointed by the judges of the municipal

court, subject to confirmation by the majority vote of the legislative body of the city, and serves until removed by the judges upon confirmation of the legislative body.

Summary of Bill: The court administrator, rather than the presiding judge, is responsible for the direction and supervision of the director of probation services of the Seattle Municipal Court.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Placing the director of the probation department under the supervision of the court administrator rather than the presiding judge will provide stability and flexibility, because the court administrator supervises other court staff and is not limited to a one-year term as is the presiding judge. All of the judges of the Seattle Municipal Court support this change.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Helen Halpert, Presiding Judge, Seattle Municipal Court (pro); and Ken Klimusko, Court Administrator, Seattle Municipal Court (pro).