HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 5142

As Passed House
April 8, 1997

Title: An act relating to the collection of judgments.

Brief Description: Allowing county clerks to collect civil judgments where the county is the creditor.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Loveland and Winsley).

Brief History:
   Committee Activity:
      Law & Justice: 3/26/97, 4/1/97 [DP].
   Floor Activity:
      Passed House: 4/8/97, 94-0.

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; Radcliff; Sherstad and Skinner.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: County clerks have express statutory authority to collect court-ordered financial obligations imposed on criminal offenders. The authority applies to obligations imposed under the Sentencing Reform Act as part of a sentence for a misdemeanor or felony conviction. The clerk may collect the obligation directly or through a collection agency. This statutory authority does not mention juvenile offenders.

No such express statutory authority exists for the collection of civil judgments.

Summary of Bill: County clerks are given express authority to collect unpaid financial obligations that have been imposed on juvenile offenders. The same collection options that apply in the case of an adult offender are made available in the case of a juvenile offender.

County clerks are given express authority to collect civil judgments where the county is the judgment creditor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill clears up uncertainty and completes a process begun several years ago to clarify the authority of county clerks.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Debbie Wilke, Washington Association of County Officials.