

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2064

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to providing for the availability of online legal research capability on a cost-efficient basis to all residents of the state.

Brief Description: Providing for the availability of online legal research capability on a cost-efficient basis to all residents of the state.

Sponsors: Representative Carrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 2/23/01, 2/27/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a study of the feasibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of having a private vendor provide on-line legal research services through the State Library to any resident of the state.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Carrell, Republican Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Co-Chair; Hurst, Democratic Vice Chair; Lambert, Republican Vice Chair; Boldt, Casada, Dickerson, Esser, Lovick and McDermott.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background:

Each county with a population of 8,000 or more is required to maintain a county law library. The library is governed by a board of trustees. Smaller counties may have a law library which is run by the prosecuting attorney. Counties may also join to form a regional law library. In a county where a library is required, a "suitable" room with adequate heat, light, and janitorial services must be provided by the county. In a county of 300,000 population or more, the law library must be free to all users. In smaller counties, libraries must be free for judges, county officials, lawyers, and any others as

determined by the law library board.

Funding for law libraries is through portions of the civil filing fees in superior and district courts. Twelve dollars of every new probate or civil filing fee collected in superior court and \$6 of every civil filing fee collected in district court are to be used for the support of the county law library. Upon approval of the library board of trustees and the county legislative authority, the fee in superior court may be increased to \$15.

Summary of Bill:

The State Library, the State Law Library and the Department of General Administration are to conduct a study on the delivery of legal research services. The study is to consider the feasibility, cost-efficiency, and effectiveness of having a vendor contract with the State Library for services to which any resident of the state could subscribe.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The bill offers an exciting prospect for delivering legal research services.

Testimony Against: None.

(With concerns) The study may require the assistance of outside expertise. The delivery system contemplated may turn the State Library into are-seller of private vendors' services.

Testified: (In support) Julie Murray, King County; and Deborah Norwood, Washington State Law Library.

(With concerns) Nancy Zussy, Washington State Library.