

Judiciary

HB 1241

Title: An act relating to election of supreme court justices.

Brief Description: Providing for election of supreme court justices from three judicial districts.

Sponsors: Representatives Schindler, Carrell, Cox, Crouse, Ahern, Boldt and B. Chandler

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires supreme court justices to be elected from three supreme court judicial districts.*
- *Requires the Secretary of State to assign by lot each supreme court judicial position to a judicial district so that one justice from each district is elected at each biennial election.*

Hearing Date: 2/6/01

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

The state constitution and statutory law govern the composition and election of the justices of the state supreme court. There are nine justices of the supreme court, as set by statute.

Article IV, Section 3 of the state constitution provides for the justices of the supreme court to be elected by the voters on a statewide basis. Three justices are elected at each biennial general election for a term of six years. A vacancy in a supreme court position is filled by appointment by the Governor until the next general election. The justice elected at the next general election holds office for the remainder of the unexpired term.

A change to the requirement of statewide election for justices of the supreme court requires a constitutional amendment. HJR 4203 is a companion measure to this bill and proposes a constitutional amendment to allow election of supreme court justices from three supreme

court judicial districts.

Summary of Bill:

Supreme court justices must be elected from three supreme court judicial districts. One justice from each supreme court judicial district must be elected at each biennial general election. A vacancy that occurs on the supreme court must be filled with a person who is a resident of the supreme court judicial district for which the vacancy occurs.

The Secretary of State, in cooperation with the chief justice of the supreme court, must assign by lot each supreme court judicial position to be filled in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections to a supreme court judicial district so that one justice from each district is elected at each biennial general election.

This act takes effect only if the proposed constitutional amendment contained in SJR 8201 is approved by the voters. (Note: It is likely that the reference to SJR 8201 is a mistake and the intended reference is to HJR 4203. However, both measures are the same.)

Effective Date: *If the proposed constitutional amendment is ratified at the next general election, Sections 1 and 2 take effect January 1, 2004, and Section 3 takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested February 2, 2001.*