

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5395

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Judiciary, February 13, 2001  
Ways & Means, March 6, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to the administrator for the courts.

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to the administrator for the courts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Long, Constantine and Kline; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/8/01, 2/13/01 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/22/01, 3/6/01 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Costa, Johnson, Kastama, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5395 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Brown, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Fraser, Hewitt, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Rossi, Sheahan, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Winsley and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

**Background:** The Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) is a state agency that has the responsibility of assisting judicial personnel in carrying out their court duties. The OAC, under the supervision and direction of the Chief Justice, helps administer programs, conducts training and educational seminars, gathers statistical data, prepares budgets, and assists judges in the administration of the judiciary.

The Board for Judicial Administration, as part of its court reform package, is recommending that the statutes governing the powers and duties of the OAC be expanded and modernized to reflect the needs of the judiciary.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The requirement that the Administrator for the Courts not be older than 60 years of age at the time of appointment is removed from the statute. The prohibition against the OAC staff directly or indirectly practicing law is deleted.

The OAC is authorized to provide technical support of court coordinating councils, under the direction of the Board for Judicial Administration.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The provision requiring OAC to periodically assess unmet civil legal needs of low-income persons and develop a funding plan to meet such needs is removed. The \$500,000 appropriation from the public safety and education account is removed. A technical change to the authorization of OAC providing support to the court coordinating councils is made due to the removal of the appropriation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For (Judiciary):** Staff attorneys give a wide variety of legal advice to numerous bar committees and they do pro bono work. The OAC should do more work on identifying the needs of poor persons who have unmet civil needs. Court coordinating councils will be an innovative means of improving the court system, especially on a regional basis. The OAC hopes that the Legislature will provide seed money to support the councils. The councils will provide much needed administrative assistance.

**Testimony Against (Judiciary):** None.

**Testified (Judiciary):** PRO: Chief Justice Gerry Alexander, BJA; Mary McQueen, OAC; Judge Michael Roewe, District Court Judges Association; Kirk Johns, WSBA.

**Testimony For (Ways & Means):** This implements some of the recommendations of the Court 2001 Project conducted by the Board for Judicial Administration. The local court coordinating councils are crucial to improving judicial operations.

**Testimony Against (Ways & Means):** None.

**Testified (Ways & Means):** PRO: Mary McQueen, OAC; Victor Moore, OAC.