

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5695

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE, MARCH 4, 1991

Brief Description: Increasing salaries for prosecuting attorneys.

SPONSORS: Senators Barr, Anderson, McMullen, Matson and Johnson.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5695 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Nelson, Chairman; Thorsness, Vice Chairman; Erwin, L. Kreidler, Madsen, Rasmussen, and A. Smith.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1991; March 4, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The salaries for county prosecuting attorneys are set by statute and are determined by the county class. The salaries are currently set as follows: class AA - \$30,300; class A and first class - \$24,800; second and third class - \$23,700; fourth class - \$16,500 (with a university in the county, \$14,300 without); fifth class - \$13,200; and sixth through ninth class \$9,900.

The county legislative authority is authorized to increase or decrease the prosecutor's salary. The state pays one-half of the prosecuting attorney's salary.

SUMMARY:

The salaries for prosecuting attorneys are tied to the salaries of the superior and district court judge's salaries. In class AA and A counties and counties of the first through fourth class, the prosecuting attorney's salary is no less than the salary for a superior court judge (\$80,500). In counties of the fifth through ninth class the salary is no less than the salary for a district court judge (\$76,600). Part-time prosecutors are paid on a pro rata basis.

For the first biennium, the state reimburses the county for the added expense incurred as a result of this bill.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The minimum salary for all county prosecuting attorneys is the salary set for superior court judges.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

There is an excessive turnover in the position of prosecuting attorney, due to the inadequate salary in some counties. Eight of the 39 attorneys elected in 1986 retired prior to the end of their term. Twenty-three of Washington's 39 prosecuting attorneys have never had an election opponent.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Senator Scott Barr, prime sponsor; John Ladenburg, Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney (pro); Jeff Sullivan, Yakima County Prosecuting Attorney (pro); Jerry Wette, Stevens County Prosecuting Attorney (pro); Patrick Sutherland, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney (pro)