

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5956

As Passed Senate, March 10, 1995

Title: An act relating to collection of unpaid court-ordered legal financial obligations.

Brief Description: Collecting unpaid court obligations.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Strannigan, Rinehart, Hargrove, Smith, Schow, Prentice, Hochstatter, Wojahn, Haugen, Sheldon, Gaspard, Deccio, Spanel, Morton, Pelz, Franklin, Bauer, Kohl, Sutherland, Palmer, McDonald, Wood, A. Anderson, Owen, McAuliffe, Fraser, Long, West, Oke and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/28/95 [DP].

Passed Senate, 3/10/95, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; C. Anderson, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Rinehart, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

Background: Courts impose various fines, fees and penalties on defendants. When defendants fail to fulfill the terms of a court order, superior court clerks may use county collection services or contract with collection agencies to collect the monies owed. The cost of collecting the unpaid fines, fees and penalties are paid by the defendants. If a criminal offender is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections, counties only may collect the moneys with the approval of the department.

Concern has been expressed that the statute does not explicitly authorize a superior court judge to impose the cost of collecting unpaid court obligations.

Summary of Bill: The statute authorizing counties to collect unpaid court obligations is clarified.

A superior court judge is authorized, at the time of sentencing or within ten years, to assess as court costs monies paid to collect unpaid court-ordered legal financial obligations. Superior court clerks are encouraged to initiate collection action against criminal offenders.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill helps to clarify the statute that was passed last year.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Debbie Wilkie, Assn. of County Officials.

House Amendment(s): A technical amendment is made to clarify that the bill applies to misdemeanor convictions as well as felony convictions.