

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5125

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Judiciary

**Title:** An act relating to district court civil jurisdiction.

**Brief Description:** Increasing district court civil jurisdiction.

**Sponsors:** Senators Padden, Darneille, Roach and Hatfield.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Judiciary: 3/18/15, 4/1/15 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill**  
**(As Amended by Committee)**

- Increases the jurisdictional limit for district courts to \$100,000.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Jinkins, Chair; Kilduff, Vice Chair; Rodne, Ranking Minority Member; Shea, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Haler, Hansen, Kirby, Klippert, Muri, Orwall, Stokesbary and Walkinshaw.

**Staff:** Brent Campbell (786-7152).

**Background:**

There are four levels of courts in Washington: (1) the Supreme Court; (2) the Court of Appeals; (3) the superior courts; and (4) courts of limited jurisdiction (district and municipal courts).

Superior courts are courts of general jurisdiction. They generally have no limit on the types of civil and criminal cases heard. They also hear appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

District courts also have jurisdiction over both criminal and civil cases, but they are limited in the types of cases they may hear. District courts have no jurisdiction in civil actions where the value of the claim or the amount at issue exceeds \$75,000.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

District courts are given jurisdiction over certain civil actions if, for each claimant, the value of the claim or the amount at issue does not exceed \$100,000.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The jurisdictional limit is applied to each claimant for the value of the claim or the amount at issue instead of applying only the value of the claim to each claimant.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This is a simple bill that increases the jurisdiction of district courts from \$75,000 to \$100,000. This is a needed change. People go to district court for many reasons, including because it can be less costly and more streamlined. There has been no opposition to raising this jurisdiction limit to \$100,000.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Padden, prime sponsor; and Melanie Stewart, District and Municipal Court Judges.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.