

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5621

C 86 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing the jurisdictional amount for small claims courts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Warnick, Padden, Holy, Wagoner and Wilson, L.).

Senate Committee on Law & Justice
House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary

Background: Small claims court is a department of the district court. The hearing and disposition of a small claims court action are informal and generally the parties may not be represented by attorneys without permission from a judge. The parties may offer evidence through witness testimony and the judge may informally consult witnesses or otherwise investigate the controversy. The hearing and disposition of small claims court actions is informal, with the objective of dispensing speedy and quick justice between the litigants.

The jurisdiction of the small claims court is limited to cases for the recovery of money where the amount claimed does not exceed \$5,000. This dollar limit has been raised twice—in 2008 from \$4,000, and in 2001 from \$2,500.

Summary: The jurisdiction of small claims court is raised from \$5,000 to \$10,000 in cases brought by a natural person. The jurisdictional limit for all other small claims court cases remains at \$5,000. Natural person is defined as human being.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	39	9
House	95	0

Effective: July 28, 2019

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.