

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2284

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, MARCH 2, 1992

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to county law libraries.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Haugen, Horn, Paris and May)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, Hayner, M. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Rinehart, L. Smith, Talmadge, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: March 2, 1992

BACKGROUND:

County law libraries: A county law library must be maintained in a county with a population between 8,000 and 125,000, as well as counties with a population exceeding 300,000. Counties with a population between 125,000 and 300,000 are not required to have a law library.

The governing boards of the county law libraries include members of the county bar association, judges of the superior court, and a member of the county legislative authority. In counties having a population in excess of 300,000, the bar association members are appointed by the superior court judges. In counties with a population between 8,000 and 125,000, the county bar association appoints its own representatives.

Other minor differences exist in the statutes governing the law libraries in the two types of counties.

County law library funding: A county law library fund exists in each county required to maintain a library. The county is required to contribute to the fund \$7 for each civil filing in superior court and \$3 for each civil filing in district court. The county legislative authority may increase the \$7 contribution to \$9 if requested by the law library board.

Court fees: Filing and other fees for superior court are established by statute. The civil filing fee in district court is statutorily set at \$25. Some district courts have administratively established other fees for issuing writs, preparing transcripts, requesting a jury, and other services. Thirty-two percent of district court fees are deposited in the state's public safety and education account.

SUMMARY:

County law libraries: Counties with a population between 125,000 and 300,000 are required to maintain a law library, and the statutory provisions applicable to counties with a population under 125,000 are made applicable to those counties with a population under 300,000. For all counties, the county bar association is authorized to appoint its representatives to the governing board. Other provisions relating to law library operation, maintenance, and access are modified.

County law library funding: The \$7 contribution from each superior court civil filing may be increased up to \$15 by the county legislative authority if requested by the law library board.

Court fees: The district court civil filing fee is increased to \$31, and fees are established for issuing writs, preparing transcripts, requesting a jury, and other services. These fees range from \$5 to \$50. Municipal courts may also charge these fees.

Effective July 1, 1993, the Administrator for the Courts, at the direction of the Board for Judicial Administration, shall establish fees for all courts in the state.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

The provision allowing a \$15 contribution to the county law library fund from each Superior Court filing fee is deleted. The language authorizing the Administrator for the Courts to set court fees is deleted.

TESTIMONY FOR:

The fixed rate of contributions to law libraries needs to be adjusted to prevent erosion of services and facilities offered by county law libraries, which have had to reduce essential subscriptions and research materials due to funding restrictions.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Marlin Appelwick; Patrick Comfort,
Washington State Bar Association; Janet Gildenhar, Washington
Association of County Law Libraries