

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2702

As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Creating two new superior court positions for Yakima county.

Sponsors: Representatives Honeyford, Lisk, Sheahan, Appelwick and Skinner; by request of Board for Judicial Administration.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/27/98, 2/5/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; McDonald, Vice Chairman; Sterk, Vice Chairman; Costa, Ranking Minority Member; Constantine, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carrell; Cody; Kenney; Lambert; Lantz; Mulliken; Robertson and Sherstad.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) conducts a weighted caseload analysis to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. The Legislature has authorized six judges for Yakima County. The caseload analysis by the OAC indicates a need for two more judicial positions in Yakima County.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary and other employee benefits of a superior court judge are paid by the state. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as capital and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

New superior court positions are filled by gubernatorial appointment. The appointed judge must then stand for election at the next general election.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The number of superior court judges in Yakima County is increased from six to eight. The new positions take effect immediately, but upon request of the superior court, the Yakima County commissioners may set the actual starting date for the positions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Analysis shows the need for the additional positions. The county is in support of adding two new judges.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Honeyford, prime sponsor; Chuck Foster, Board for Judicial Administration (pro); Theresa Doty, Court Administrator, Yakima County Superior Court (pro); Michael Shaw, Washington State Association of Counties (pro); and Jim Potts, Yakima County Commissioners (pro).