

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2702

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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

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 Bill: The number of superior court judges in Yakima County is increased from six to eight. The new positions take effect January 1, 1999, but upon request of the superior court, the Yakima County commissioners may set the actual starting date for the positions.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Office of Program Research