

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6316

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, February 5, 2004

Title: An act relating to jury source lists in counties with more than one superior court facility.

Brief Description: Authorizing jury source lists to be divided by case assignment area.

Sponsors: Senators Esser, Kline, Johnson, Roach, Thibaudeau and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/30/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6316 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Esser, Vice Chair; Brandland, Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Kline, Roach and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Jinnah Rose-McFadden (786-7421)

Background: Superior courts use jury source lists to determine eligible residents for jury service. A jury source list is a list, updated annually, of registered voters, licensed drivers, and identicard holders who reside in the county in which the court is located. Currently, superior courts draw jurors from the entire county served by the court. In large counties, this can result in residents traveling excessive distances to serve as jurors.

Summary of Substitute Bill: For superior courts located in counties with more than one superior court facility, and separate case assignment areas for each facility, the jury source list may be divided into jury assignment areas. The jury source list for each assignment area must consist of registered voters, licensed drivers, and identicard holders residing in that area.

The boundaries of jury assignment areas may be designated and adjusted by the Administrative Office of the Courts, based on the most current U.S. census data, and at the request of superior court judges.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill makes it much easier for residents of King County to serve as jurors. King County is a large county and residents summoned to jury duty travel great distances to serve. As a result, it is a challenge to get residents to reply to summons' for jury

duty. By reducing the travel time and expense, there will be a higher compliance rate. The courts have studied the impact of splitting jury source lists by case assignment areas, and have found that there is no significant impact on the demographic make-up of the superior court facilities.

Testimony Against: The study completed by the court was based on zip codes, which is not a sufficiently delicate means of producing accurate demographic information. It is unlikely that the superior court facilities will have similar jury make-ups. This will lead to maneuvering, by attorneys, to file cases in particular superior court facilities. Additionally, there are questions regarding the constitutionality of splitting superior court jury source lists into assignment areas.

Testified: PRO: Ronald Kessler, King County Superior Court; CON: David S. Heller, WACDL, WDA.