2739
Sponsor(s): Representatives Darneille, Shabro, Lantz, Skinner and Lovick

Brief Description: Providing funding for certain justice system activities.

HB 2739 - DIGEST

Finds that there exists a crisis in the capacity of the justice system to meet the civil legal needs of low-income people, that there is an urgent need to address this crisis, that counties continue to experience significant justice system related needs, that county-based law libraries play an important role in helping members of the public understand and effectively assert important legal rights and that they face significant needs for new revenue, and that action needs to be taken to expand the revenue base available to address these and other important justice system operations.

Finds that in order to secure the needed additional revenue available for these activities, it is necessary and appropriate to increase certain fees and costs for services provided in association with the initiation and conduct of civil actions in the superior courts of this state.

Creates an office of civil legal services as an independent agency of the judicial branch. The office shall not provide direct representation of clients.

Provides that activities of the office of civil legal services shall be carried out by a director of civil legal services.

Requires the director to: (1) Contract with one or more qualified legal aid providers to provide civil indigent representation authorized by RCW 43.08.260 (as recodified by this act);

(2) Monitor and oversee the use of state funding to ensure compliance with this chapter and other applicable conditions;

(3) Report biennially to the administrator for the courts, the supreme court, the access to justice board, and the joint legislative civil legal services oversight committee on the status of access to the civil justice system for low-income people and make recommendations regarding efforts that should be undertaken to enhance access; and

(4) Submit a biennial budget request.