

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2762

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, February 29, 2008

Title: An act relating to changing the number of district court judges.

Brief Description: Increasing the number of district court judges in Cowlitz county.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko, Blake, Orcutt and Herrera; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 95-1.

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/29/08 [DP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Hargrove, McDermott, Roach and Weinstein.

Staff: Robert Kay (786-7405)

Background: The number of district court judges in each county is set by statute. Any change in the number of full- and part-time judicial positions in a county's district court is determined by the Legislature after receiving a recommendation from the state supreme court.

The supreme court's recommendation is based on an objective workload analysis developed annually by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which takes into account available judicial resources and the caseload activity of the court. The AOC may consult with the Board of Judicial Administration and the District and Municipal Court Judge's Association to develop procedures and methods to apply the objective workload analysis.

Changes in the number of district court judges may not be made in a year in which judicial elections for district court are held.

The AOC completes a judicial impact note, which identifies any cost to the state or local government, for each recommendation to vary the number of district court judges in a county. In order for an additional judicial position to become effective, the legislative authority of the affected county must approve the position and agree to pay, out of county funds and without reimbursement from the state, expenses associated with the new position.

Cowlitz County has two elected district court judges. An increase to at least three district court judicial positions is justified according to the AOC's objective workload analysis.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The number of statutorily authorized district court judges is increased in Cowlitz County from two to three.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: None.

Persons Testifying: No one.