

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5247

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As Passed Senate, February 16, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to superior court judicial positions.

**Brief Description:** Modifying provisions relating to superior court judicial positions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Spanel and Haugen; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 1/19/07 [DP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 2/16/07, 42-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Carrell, Hargrove and Weinstein.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Roach.

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** The Legislature sets by statute the number of superior court judges in each county. The state and the counties share the costs of the superior courts. Benefits and one-half of the salary 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. There are currently two superior court judges in the counties of San Juan and Island jointly.

Periodically, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) does a workload analysis of the superior courts to determine if additional judicial positions are needed.

**Summary of Bill:** In the county of San Juan, there is one superior court judge and, in the county of Island, there are two judges of the superior court. The additional judicial position created by this act becomes effective only if: (1) the legislative authority of San Juan county documents its approval of the additional position and its agreement to pay the expenses of the position out of county funds, without reimbursement from the state; and (2) the legislative authority of Island county documents its approval and its agreement to pay, out of county funds, the expenses of the two judicial positions currently serving San Juan and Island counties jointly, without reimbursement from the state.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*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.*

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2007.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The counties of Island and San Juan are one judicial district. The Superior Court bench and the Island and San Juan County Board of Commissioners support this bill. The Office of Administrator for the Court's workload analysis shows the need for three judges for these two counties. The citizens would benefit from increased access to the courts and the state would benefit by a savings of \$20,000 per year from no longer having to pay for work necessitated air travel for the judges.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Jeff Hall, Board for Judicial Administration.