S-4508.1			
9-4300.T			

## SENATE BILL 6568

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senator Baumgartner

State of Washington

Read first time 02/17/14. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to ordering the supreme court to increase the 2 number of cases it decides; creating a new section; providing an 3 effective date; and declaring an emergency.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 5 NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that the supreme court has a constitutional duty under Article IV of the Washington state 6 Constitution to hear and decide cases so the citizens can have timely and efficient resolution of their disputes. The legislature finds that 8 9 the vast majority of other states have seven or fewer justices on their state supreme courts. Despite the fact that additional resources in 10 the form of two extra justices have been funded by the legislature, the 11 caseload of the supreme court has consistently declined over the last 12 13 According to the most recent information provided by the 14 administrative office of the courts, the supreme court decided one 15 hundred thirty-one fewer cases in 2012 than it did in 2008. Therefore, 16 the legislature finds that the supreme court is not meeting its constitutional duty. 17
- 18 The need for immediate action could not be more apparent. 19 Conversely failing to act would send a strong message about the court's

p. 1 SB 6568

good faith commitment about fulfilling its constitutional promise. 1 2 some it may seem counterproductive to seek quantity over quality and that this is a blunt instrument to deal with a fairly complex, nuanced, 3 and debatable problem. Others may also view it as an obscene violation 4 of the doctrine of separation and unthinkable intrusion into a matter 5 clearly within the purview of the supreme court, 6 7 legislature shall not stand idly by while the supreme court makes 8 unfulfilled promises.

The legislature has no wish to be forced into issuing specific directives to the supreme court to decide specific cases in order to process them more speedily or to hold the supreme court members in contempt of the legislature. However, it is incumbent upon the supreme court to demonstrate through real and immediate action that it is making real and measurable progress, not simply promises. The legislature hereby orders the court to increase the number of cases it decides by fifty percent by the 2017-2018 court calendar. The legislature also demands that the supreme court draw upon its purported budgetary expertise and provide a report by April 30, 2014, as to how it plans to fully implement this order and provide a timetable for funding its plan.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect April 1, 2014.

--- END ---

SB 6568 p. 2

9

10

1112

13

14

15

16 17

18

19

20