

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2446

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

Law & Justice

**Title:** An act relating to superior court judges.

**Brief Description:** Creating two additional superior court positions for Chelan and Douglas counties jointly.

**Sponsors:** Representative Foreman; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/24/96, 1/30/96 [DP].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; Delvin, Vice Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Dellwo, Ranking Minority Member; Costa, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Carrell; Chappell; Cody; Lambert; McMahan; Morris; Murray; Robertson; Smith and Sterk.

**Staff:** Edie Adams (786-7180).

**Background:** The Legislature sets by statute the number of Superior Court judges in each county. Periodically, the Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) conducts a weighted caseload study to determine the need for additional judges in the various counties. Currently, Chelan and Douglas counties jointly have three judges. The weighted caseload analysis by the OAC indicates a need, as of 1995, for 4.53 judges in the counties.

Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary of a Superior Court judge is 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.

**Summary of Bill:** The number of judicial positions in Chelan and Douglas counties is increased from three to five. Both additional judicial positions will take effect January 1, 1997.

The new judicial positions become effective only if the legislative authorities of Chelan and Douglas counties jointly agree that the counties will pay their share of the cost of the positions without reimbursement from the state.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect January 1, 1997.

**Testimony For:** The workload of Superior Court judges in Chelan and Douglas counties has increased to an extent that two additional judicial positions are needed.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Foreman, prime sponsor; and Judge "Chip" Small, Superior Court Judges Association (pro).