

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2259

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 20, 1996

Title: An act relating to impanelling juries.

Brief Description: Revising the procedure for impanelling juries.

Sponsors: Representatives McMahan, Sheahan, Dellwo and Costa; by request of Administrator for the Courts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/19/96, 2/20/96 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Johnson, Long, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: To assist in the random selection of jurors, current law requires the court clerk to put the names of summoned jurors on separate ballots, and deposit the ballots in a box. The clerk then is to draw the required number of names for voir dire examination.

This procedure is considered unduly burdensome, particularly in large counties such as King County where approximately 250 jurors are called four days a week.

Many counties use automated systems to select jurors, in which a computer randomizes the names of jurors and selects a certain number to go to each courtroom.

In 1993, the Washington Supreme Court amended Criminal Rule 6.3, which simply requires juror selection to be random.

Summary of Bill: Jurors are selected at random and a voir dire examination of the jury panel is conducted. Provisions regarding the procedure for randomly selecting jurors are repealed, and no new method for randomly selecting jurors is prescribed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will simplify the system.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McMahan, prime sponsor.