

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5525

As Passed Senate, March 15, 1995

Title: An act relating to municipal court judges' salaries in cities over four hundred thousand.

Brief Description: Providing for setting salaries of municipal court judges in cities over four hundred thousand.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey, Johnson, C. Anderson and Smith.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/15/95, 2/28/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/15/95, 28-19.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators C. Anderson, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Johnson, Long, Rinehart and Schow.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: The caseload in Seattle municipal court and district court is virtually the same. District court has a civil calendar and handles small claims cases, as well as criminal cases, but municipal court handles a higher volume of criminal cases. There is concern that the discrepancy in salary between Seattle municipal court judges and district court judges is unwarranted.

Summary of Bill: The salary of Seattle municipal court judges is fixed by the legislative body of the city in the amount set by the State Salary Commission for district court judges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 1995.

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

Testimony For: Municipal court judges in Seattle have probably the highest volume of cases in the state. Historically, their pay was commensurate with superior court. This bill will get the issue of municipal court judges' salary out of the political arena. It is an equity-parity issue.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Heavey, prime sponsor; Judge Hollifiele, Seattle Municipal Court; Judge Robert McBeth, King County District Court; Judge John McCarthy, District and Municipal Court Judges Association; Mike Doubleday, City of Seattle.