

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5026

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE, FEBRUARY 13, 1991

Brief Description: Authorizing preparation of a plan to merge lists of voters and persons issued driver's licenses.

SPONSORS: Senators Nelson, Talmadge and Thorsness.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5026 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Nelson, Chairman; Thorsness, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Hayner, L. Kreidler, Madsen, Newhouse, Rasmussen, and A. Smith.

Staff: Jon Carlson (786-7459)

Hearing Dates: February 6, 1991; February 13, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The jury source list is the compilation of registered voters provided to the courts by the auditor in each county. According to a 1988 Judicial Council study report, the percentage of persons registered to vote in Washington State has been decreasing since 1952. There is concern that courts are experiencing an increasing shortage of jurors as the result of dwindling names on the jury source list. An expanded jury source list, which merges the names of Washington State drivers with registered voters, might better reflect the demographics of the community and provide a larger list from which to select jurors.

SUMMARY:

A number of state agencies and associations are required to prepare an implementation plan for merging the list of licensed drivers, identicard holders, and registered voters in order to form an expanded jury source list.

The plan must include an analysis of costs, which functions are to be performed and paid by state and by local governments, the potential effects of a merged list, and recommendations concerning the formatting of lists and the methodology for merging the lists. The plan must be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 1992.

The Washington Association of County Clerks is requested to conduct a study to determine appropriate standards for excusing persons from jury service due to financial hardship. The Senate Law and Justice Committee and the House Judiciary Committee ask that they receive a report of the findings by January 1, 1992.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

A report on the plan and the plan in the form of proposed legislation shall be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 1992.

Appropriation: \$35,000

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 4, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

This measure would increase the overall number of persons available to serve as jurors.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Ralph Munro, Secretary of State; Sam Reed, Thurston County Auditor; Judy Dan Berschauer, Thurston County Superior Court; Donna Karvia, Lewis County Clerk; James E. Sedney, Washington Association of Defense Lawyers; Mary Alice Theiler, Minority & Justice Commission; Theodore Spearman, Washington State Bar Association