

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1176

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Law & Justice, March 16, 1995

**Title:** An act relating to the number of district court judges.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing Benton county to have one additional district court judge.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Delvin, Hickel, Sheahan, Appelwick, Dellwo, Hankins, Mastin, Honeyford and Padden.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 3/16/95 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

**Staff:** Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

**Background:** By statute the Legislature determines the number of district court judges in each county. Benton County has experienced growth in the number of cases filed and tried in its district courts, in addition to adding the city of Prosser to its district court jurisdiction.

The Washington State Administrator for the Courts has conducted a "weighted caseload" study and estimates that Benton County needs another district court judge to handle the current caseload.

District courts are responsible for expenses relating to salary, capital construction, support staff, and other costs associated with operating a district court.

Legislation enacted in 1994 mistakenly authorized two district court positions for Douglas County.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The striking amendment authorizes an additional district court judge for Benton County, increasing the number of district court judges in the county from two to three. Douglas County is authorized to have one district court judge.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 13, 1995.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** The courts support this bill, especially the language of the striking amendment.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Chuck Foster, OAC.