

Washington State Judicial Branch

2024 Supplemental Budget

Secure the Supreme Court and the Temple of Justice

Agency: Supreme Court

Decision Package Code/Title: AA – Secure the Supreme Court and TOJ

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

The Supreme Court requests \$1.9 million in funding to contract with the Washington State Patrol and private security firms for an increased security presence at the Temple of Justice, particularly on oral argument days when the Bailiff is stationed in the Courtroom. Increased security is critical to securing both the employees of the Court as well as the Justices themselves given the increasing number of threats and the escalating severity of those threats.

Included in this request is the necessary equipment and technology upgrades to make security effective, such as video cameras with resolution high enough to be useful in an investigation and camera recording and badging systems that communicate with main campus security systems. (General Fund-State)

Fiscal Summary:

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	\$0	\$1,922,000	\$1,922,000	\$1,637,000	\$1,637,000	\$3,274,000
Total Expenditures						
	\$0	\$1,922,000	\$1,922,000	\$1,637,000	\$1,637,000	\$3,274,000

Package Description:

The Washington State Supreme Court resides in the Temple of Justice (TOJ), a high profile and public historical building on the Capitol Campus. The court, comprised of nine justices who are statewide elected officials, also engages in statewide outreach through the normal operations of the Court as well as through its Commissions and Task Forces. In addition to these outreach efforts, the justices participate in court sessions on college campuses and at other locations. Despite recent investments to increase security for the TOJ and the justices, security coverage still does not meet the standards set by the 2018 Security Study of the Washington State Capitol Campus.

The TOJ does not have a full-time security presence during open hours of operation. The Court currently employs only one Bailiff and one Deputy Bailiff. These two employees have many duties in addition to providing security to the court, its staff, and the public. In addition, because the Bailiff and the Deputy Bailiff are the only security for the Justices, when the court travels, both the Bailiff and the Deputy Bailiff travel with them, leaving the TOJ without any security presence. Perimeter access to the TOJ is uncontrolled and there is currently no way to screen members of the public entering the courtroom or any other part of the building.

The lack of screening currently allows anyone to enter the TOJ at any of the four public entrances and to go almost anywhere in the TOJ including the courtroom. There are no secured areas of the TOJ through which the Supreme Court Justices can travel when moving from their offices to the courtroom or to any of the four departments of the Supreme Court (The Clerk's office, the Commissioner's office, the Reporter of Decisions office, and the State Law Library). The lack of security also affects staff and executive members of the Administrative Office of the Courts, who have offices or work within the TOJ.

Supreme Court

Policy Level – AA – Secure the Supreme Court and TOJ

There are three main proposals included in this request: 1) Add Washington State Troopers dedicated for the security of the Temple of Justice (TOJ) and the Supreme Court; 2) Contract with a private security company to operate security screening at the TOJ during oral argument and court events; and 3) Purchase additional security equipment to create a comprehensive security solution. By adding WSP security to the TOJ, the court will have the ability to devote its limited bailiff resources to the Justices while Court staff at the TOJ remain protected. This level of security staffing will bring the Supreme Court into parity with the Legislature, and the court system generally. Currently, the Court of Appeals and the majority of trial courts are protected either by county sheriff personnel or by private security services. Most of these courts also operate security screening as well, adding a much-needed layer of security for their protection. These proposed solutions are consistent with the 2018 Security Study of the Washington State Capitol Campus.

The purchase of additional equipment is consistent with the recent capital project undertaken at the TOJ, which included additional wiring for future security upgrades. This equipment includes:

- Consistent badge readers on all doors to replace the irregular and inconsistent door locks throughout the building (current locks vary significantly from one door to the next);
- Additional video surveillance cameras and upgraded cameras where necessary throughout the building;
- An upgraded duress system and surveillance monitoring system that interfaces with the Capitol Campus system (current system has no connection to campus; in the event of an emergency, the WSP wouldn't know unless an individual dialed 911);
- Additional intruder alarms for windows and shatter-resistant glazing on all first-floor windows; and
- A security screening area to be operated by contracted staff on oral argument days.

These requests are consistent with the 2018 Washington State Capitol Campus Physical Security Risk Assessment as well as recognized best-practices.

Finally, in order to have parity with the Legislative Branch of Washington state government, this proposal also elevates the existing Deputy Bailiff to Lead Deputy, and reclassifies the Bailiff and Lead Deputy at salaries commensurate with the Director and Deputy Director of Security for the legislative chambers.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served:

A more secure building translates to safer access to justice and to the Court. It would be a benefit not only to the staff and Justices who work at the Court, but to all of the residents of the state who visit or need access to Court services.

Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why they were rejected as solutions:

The Court explored one other option for the staffing component prior to making this request, which is noted below. There are no alternatives to the requested equipment upgrades or the request to contract with a private company to operate a security screening area on oral argument days.

Alternative Security Staffing Plan: Create four new Deputy Bailiff positions. Based on the staffing model, the cost for this could reach up to \$635,000.

- This alternative was rejected because the preference is to have the preeminent law enforcement agency on campus – the Washington State Patrol – protect the Justices and the Temple of Justice.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

Inadequate security at the Supreme Court creates an unsafe environment for staff, the Justices and the broader public who need to access to and use court services.

Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?

Yes, this increases security for the Justices of the Supreme Court and security at the Temple of Justice.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:

It is assumed that the Supreme Court will:

Contract with the following entities on an ongoing basis.

- Washington State Patrol, for services securing the Temple of Justice (4 troopers and 1 sergeant) equaling \$1.4 million per year.
- A private security company, for services operating a security screening area
 - 261 working days, 9 hours of screening services/day, est. \$60/hour = \$140,940 per year.

Purchase the equipment outlined above for \$285,000 one-time. Estimated amounts are based on quotes obtained in September 2023.

Reclassify the Bailiff and Lead Deputy estimated at \$96,000 per year, ongoing.

How does the package relate to the Judicial Branch principal policy objectives?

Securing the Temple of Justice means protecting the safety of all who work and interact with the Court, and would provide increased accessibility to the Court. Having WSP troopers on-site would also allow for more committed and effective court management by allowing the Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff to focus on court management and to better protect the court during offsite court sessions and outreach events.

Are there impacts to other governmental entities?

The Washington State Patrol would need to provide additional staff to meet this request.

Stakeholder response:

None

Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?

No

Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?

No

Are there impacts to state facilities?

No

Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?

The 2018 Security Study of the Washington State Capitol Campus (a confidential report).

Are there information technology impacts?

No

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