WASHINGTON COURTS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

February 20, 2024

TO: Judicial Information System Committee (JISC)

FROM: Brittany Gregory, AOC Associate Director, Judicial and Legislative Relations

RE: 2024 Legislative Update

2024 Legislative Session

The 2024 Legislative session will conclude on March 7.

2024 BJA Request Legislation

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), on behalf of the Board for Judicial Administration (BJA), filed six agency request bills in the 2024 legislative session.

- HB 1992/SB 5827: Additional judicial position in Whatcom County Superior.
  - Primary Sponsor: Representative Timmons.
  - Summary: Requests an additional superior court judge for Whatcom County to work on the water rights adjudication filed by the Department of Ecology.
  - 2/16 Passed to Rules Committee for second reading.
  - State funding for position in both proposed Senate and House operating budgets.

- SB 5828: Statutory Commissioner/Referee Authority.
  - Primary Sponsor: Senator Shewmake.
  - Summary: Creates a superior court commissioner position in Whatcom County. This position was already funded in the 2023-2025 biennium budget and the commissioner will work on the water rights adjudication proceedings filed by the Department of Ecology. It would also authorize the court's use of a referee in a water adjudication without party consent or application.
  - Passed out of the Senate on 2/13.
  - Referred to House Civil Rights & Judiciary and scheduled for Public Hearing 2/20 and Executive Committee 2/21.

- HB 2006: Concerning court interpreters
  - Primary Sponsor: Representative Peterson
  - Summary: Changes Washington statute to be compliant with the Department of Justice (DOJ) policy interpretations of Title VI; updates statutory language to align with operations conducted by AOCs Court Interpreter Credentialing program; and

confers on the Interpreter and Language Access Commission (ILAC) and AOC Court Interpreter Program responsibility of credentialing sign language interpreters working in legal settings and the responsibility for discipling interpreters who violate General Rule (GR) 11.2. Proposal #5: Superior Court Judicial Position.
  - Did not pass out of the House.

- HB 2034: Notice of Court Reorganization.
  - Primary Sponsor: Representative Cheney.
  - Summary: Requires counties and cities to provide one-year written notice to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) with changes to court services, court technology services, and/or court vendors. This notification is in addition to the notice that they provide to the party with which they are terminating service.
  - First Reading, referred to Law & Justice.
  - Scheduled for Public Hearing 2/16 and executive session 2/20.

- HB 2056/SB 5848: Supreme Court Bailiff Info-Sharing
  - Primary Sponsor: Representative Goodman
  - Summary: Creates limited investigative authority for the Supreme Court bailiffs, so that they can access criminal history and non-conviction data to properly assess security threats and communicate with law enforcement.
  - First reading, referred to Senate Committee Law & Justice and scheduled for public hearing 2/16 and Executive Committee 2/20.
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- SB 5836: Additional judicial position in Clark County Superior.
  - Primary Sponsor: Senator Wilson.
  - Summary: Changes the number of Superior Court Judges in Clark County in statute from eleven to twelve.
  - Passed out of Senate on 2/13.
  - Referred to House Civil Rights & Judiciary and scheduled for Public Hearing 2/20 and Executive Committee 2/21.
  - State funding for position in both proposed Senate and House operating budgets.

Positions taken by the Board for Judicial Administration and/or the Administrative Office of the Courts or Bills of interest to judiciary

Prior to session, the BJA chairs sent a letter supporting OPD funding request and efforts addressing attorney shortages.

- SB 5780: Expanding training opportunities for public defense.
  - Primary Sponsor: Senator Torres.
  - Summary: Encouraging participation in public defense and prosecution

professions.
  - Status: Referred to House Civil Rights & Judiciary and scheduled for Public Hearing 2/20 and Executive Committee 2/21.

- HB 1911: Concerning activities in which the office of public defense may engage.
  - Primary Sponsor: Representative Taylor.
  - Summary: Concerning activities in which the office of public defense may engage without violating the prohibition on providing direct representation of clients.
  - 2/6: passed out of House.
  - 2/15: Public hearing in Law & Justice.
  - BJA signed in to support.
  - 2/20: Scheduled for executive session.

- SB 6146: Concerning tribal warrants.
  - Primary Sponsor: Senator Dhingra.
    Summary: Creates processes for state law enforcement officers to enforce tribal arrest warrants, and accompanying procedures for state courts in specified circumstances. Creates processes for state law enforcement officers and places of detention to deliver tribal fugitives to a requesting tribal authority, and accompanying procedures for state courts in specified circumstances.
  - 2/12 Passed out of Senate.
  - Public hearing held in the House Community Safety, Justice & Reentry on 2/19
  - Scheduled for executive session in the House Community Safety, Justice & Reentry for 2/20.

- SB 6073: Concerning the use of artificial intelligence language learning models in official court filings
  - Primary Sponsor: Senator Padden.
  - 1/22: Scheduled for a public hearing in Law & Justice.
  - Did not pass out of committee.