

SB

366

COMMITTEE REPORT
SENATE

FURTHER: FINANCE

1/29/80

Date: 2/5/80

Mr. President:

The Committee on JUDICIARY has had SB 366
increasing the number of superior court judges

under consideration and (a majority of the committee) (the committee)
reports it back with the following recommendations:

- do pass do not pass
- do pass with attached amendments(s)
- replace with CS for _____ same title
 new title
- and recommends _____
- AND attaches a "Letter of Intent" New Fiscal Note
- reports it back without recommendation
- referred to the _____ Committee

MEMBERS SIGNING

LD PASS

[Handwritten Signature]

MEMBERS HAVING

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

CHAIRMAN

SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR TWO ADDITIONAL ANCHORAGE JUDGES

The backlog and delay in Superior Court civil cases in Anchorage has reached an unacceptable level. Court delay has reached the point that it takes approximately 18 months from the date that a "Memo to Set" is filed until a trial can be scheduled. Even when this trial date is reached, trials are often postponed for an additional several months due to the congestion of the trial calendar and the inability of the court to provide a judge on the scheduled date. Because of this delay, cases are requiring from 18 months to more than two years from the date of filing to the date of completion at the trial court level.

The median time to trial for civil cases has increased from 417 days in 1976 to 598 days in 1979. Backlog in civil cases has grown from 2,799 at the end of 1975 to 4,499 at the end of 1978, or an increase of 61 per cent in those three years.

What has caused this rapid deterioration of the civil calendar in Anchorage? In the first instance, the civil filings in the Superior Court have increased approximately 30 per cent since 1974, with no additional Superior Court judges added during that time. Second, the number of felony trials has increased by over 80 per cent since 1975, which in turn reduces the available judge time for processing of civil cases. Also, the length of felony trials

has increased 37 per cent in the past three years. There likewise appears to be an increase in the length of trials in the civil area.

The problem of backlog in the Anchorage calendar has been addressed by a committee comprised of the Chief Justice and representatives of the Supreme Court and trial courts of Anchorage. This committee has studied the calendaring process in Anchorage extensively, and has made recommendations to the Anchorage trial court for implementation of procedures that will increase the productivity of the trial court in the future. As a result of this committee's work, the following steps have been taken in an effort to reduce the delay in processing cases and hopefully to bring the system back into a position to process civil cases within approximately a one-year time frame:

1. Beginning January 15, 1980, and continuing for four months, the Anchorage Superior Court is being augmented by an infusion of judges from other jurisdictions within the state and retired judges in an effort to work down the existing backlog. Already these judges have disposed of many pending cases.

2. The committee recommended the implementation of a revised case assignment system which will provide for an assignment of each case to an individual judge for all

future proceedings, including the trial. This earlier individual assignment system will permit the judges to obtain greater familiarity with their cases and increase the elements of judicial accountability and responsibility for efficient disposition of pending cases. These factors should contribute to a more rapid processing of civil cases.

3. A committee comprised of judges and lawyers in Anchorage has been established to work out agreement on standard requirements for pre-trial case preparation. Such requirements should eventually result in shorter, more efficient trials and hearings due to more thorough preparation by the parties.

4. A request for two additional Superior Court judges has been introduced. While the steps discussed above will aid in reducing the current short-term problem in Anchorage and will increase the long-term efficiency of the court, additional judicial resources are still necessary if the court is to avoid future backlogs and prevent deterioration of service as has happened in the past three to four years.

THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FISCAL NOTE

I. REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No. S.B. 366
 Title An Act Relating to the Number of Superior Court Judges
 Requested by Senate Judiciary Committee Date Feb. 4, 1980

II. FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected Alaska Court System
 Program Category Affected Administration of Justice
 BRU, Program, or Subprogram(s) Affected Alaska Court System
 (Note: If more than one budget component is affected, separate line-item amounts and funding for each component in the analysis section.)

EXPENDITURES (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 80	FY 81	FY 82	FY 83	FY 84	FY 85
100 PERSONAL SERVICES		297.4	319.7	343.7	369.5	397.2
200 TRAVEL		2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.9
300 CONTRACTUAL						
400 COMMODITIES		1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4
500 EQUIPMENT		14.6				
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS, ETC.						
TOTAL		315.0	323.0	347.3	373.4	401.5

FUNDING (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 80	FY 81	FY 82	FY 83	FY 84	FY 85
GENERAL FUND		315.0	323.0	347.3	373.4	401.5
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER (Specify Fund Source)						

POSITIONS

	FY 80	FY 81	FY 82	FY 83	FY 84	FY 85
FULL TIME		8	8	8	8	8
PART TIME						
TEMPORARY						

III ANALYSIS (See Fiscal Note Preparation Instructions, Section III)

See attached Budget Summary.

IV. DATE February 4, 1980 PREPARED BY Richard P. Barrier
 AGENCY Alaska Court System
 PHONE 264-0545
 Original: Legislative Finance
 cc: Budget and Management
 Prime Sponsor (First Legislator Named)

BUDGET SUMMARY - S.B. 366

Personnel:

2 judges at \$63,120	\$126,240	
Benefits	<u>7,719</u>	
Total judges	133,959	\$133,959
2 secretaries at \$20,136 (Range 12)	40,272	
2 in-court clerks at \$20,136 (Range 12)	40,272	
2 law clerks at \$23,808 (Range 15)	47,616	
Benefits	<u>35,262</u>	
Total support	163,424	163,424
Total Personnel	\$297,383	

Travel: 2,000

Commodities: 1,000

Equipment: 14,600

Grand Total \$314,983