March 20, 2009

The Honorable Frank Chopp  
Speaker, Washington House of Representatives  
339C Legislative Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am writing to express support for SB5135, which would add five judges in King County District Court over the next two years. We ask that they be scheduled for full House consideration as soon as possible.

The mission of the King County District Court has three components. First, the Court serves the public by providing an accessible forum. Second, it provides a tribunal that is fair, efficient, and understandable to the parties. Finally, the Court provides fair access to justice while maintaining an atmosphere of respect for the dignity of all individuals.

These three components of the District Court’s mission — access, efficiency, and dignity — are critical in serving the public. The District Court can only accomplish these goals when its judges have the appropriate case volume.

Our District Court judges will always have full dockets. But studies have shown that when judges become so inundated by an overwhelming volume of cases, the fundamental purposes of the court begin to fail. Those who ultimately suffer are the public. No longer is the court accessible. It cannot run efficiently. And the individual litigants who face the sobering prospects of litigation become a mere number, and do not feel the dignity they deserve when gripped by the process of our justice system.

This bill will provide a better judge-to-case ratio that is crucial in serving the public. By granting judges a more appropriate case volume, the Legislature will ensure that those members of the public who come before the Court will have a dignified and diligent opportunity to be heard. By adding only five justices, this Bill is not an overwhelming change, but a reasoned and incremental approach that will significantly benefit the public. Now is the time to enact this Bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our support.
Kindest Regards.

Sincerely yours,

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