



Legislation Text

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File #: 2016-0307, Version: 2

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Clerk 06/29/2016

AN ORDINANCE establishing the protocol committee; adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2A and repealing Ordinance 8936, Section 1.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. As authorized by Ordinance 8936 in 1989, the King County council, the executive and the superior court judges entered into an agreement ("the protocol agreement") establishing a process for assessing and meeting judicial and related staffing needs in superior court. The protocol agreement mandated development of a methodology for determining the need for future judicial positions.
2. Since 1989, the methodology used to evaluate judicial need has evolved, reflecting the improved depth of data available to superior court. The methodology, focusing on trends in pending caseload, age of pending cases and the use of pro tem judicial resources, has been modified twice, in 1998 and 2007, to further improve its effectiveness and accuracy.
3. The parties to the protocol agreement agree that public transparency would be improved by replacing the protocol agreement and establishing a framework, codified in King County Code, under which recommendations for future changes to the number of judges or commissioners needed in the superior court would be made to the legislative and executive branches.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Section 2 of this ordinance shall constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 2A.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. A. A protocol committee is hereby established. The committee shall

be composed of the following members:

1. One superior court judge, selected by that court, who shall be the chair of the committee;
2. One member of the council, selected by the council chair;
3. The executive or the executive's designee; and
4. One representative of the King County Bar Association, selected by that association.

B. The responsibilities of the protocol committee shall be to review and, as necessary, to revise the methodology for evaluating the number of judges or commissioners needed in the superior court and to make recommendations to the council and the executive on any changes to the number of superior court judges or commissioners as a result of the outcomes learned from applying the methodology.

C.1. A technical committee is hereby established. The committee shall be composed of the following members:

- a. one employee from the legislative branch, selected by the chair or the chair's designee;
- b. one employee from the superior court, selected by that court; and
- c. one employee from the executive branch, selected by the executive or the executive's designee.

2. Technical committee members shall have experience in statistical methods and knowledge of court administration.

D. The technical committee shall be convened by the chief administrative officer of the superior court. The responsibilities of the technical committee shall be to assist the protocol committee in applying the methodology to determine judicial need. The committee shall: collect data; analyze and advise the protocol committee on the statistical outcomes produced from applying the methodology; and recommend changes to the number of superior court judges or commissioners and changes to the methodology used to determine the number of judges or commissioners needed in the superior court, as may be appropriate.

E. The chair of the protocol committee shall convene the protocol committee to review any proposed change in the number of superior court judges or commissioners based on the applied methodology.

F. The protocol committee shall transmit a report to the executive and to the council making recommendations on the number of judges or commissioners needed in the superior court. The report shall describe in detail the methodology applied, the rationale for the methodology, including any changes to the methodology, and any conclusion reached with regard to the number of judges or commissioners needed in the superior court. The committee's report to the council shall be transmitted in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.

G. The executive shall transmit to the council a letter reflecting acceptance of the protocol committee's recommendations or suggesting any revisions to the protocol committee's recommendations and the basis for these revisions. The executive's letter shall be transmitted in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.

SECTION 3. Ordinance 8936, Section 1, is hereby repealed.