



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**March 20, 2001**

**Motion 11131**

**Proposed No. 2001-0066.3**

**Sponsors Nickels**

1                   A MOTION related to the compensation of jurors.

2

3                   WHEREAS, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the  
4 Washington State Constitution guarantee the right of every person to be judged by a jury  
5 of their peers. However, this right can only be implemented when citizens who are called  
6 for jury service appear and serve. Consequently, state statute and county ordinance  
7 establish systems for calling citizens for jury duty and for appropriately compensating  
8 these citizens when they serve, and

9                   WHEREAS, the state legislature recognizes that those called for jury service  
10 should be compensated, first setting a standard of five dollars per day in 1951. In 1959,  
11 the rate increased to ten dollars for superior court jurors and in 1975, that rate was  
12 extended to district court jurors. In 1979, the legislature set compensation at a range of  
13 not less than ten dollars and no more than twenty-five dollars per day, allowing the  
14 county legislative authority to establish the appropriate level of compensation, and

15                   WHEREAS, the county has never acted on setting the jury compensation beyond  
16 the minimum ten dollars per day established in statute. Consequently, juror

17 compensation has not changed for forty years for superior court jurors and twenty-five  
18 years for district court jurors, and

19 WHEREAS, data show that only sixteen percent of those called for jury service in  
20 King County actually appear. The absence of an appropriate juror pool limits the rights  
21 of the accused and hampers the efficiency of the court. While there might be many  
22 reasons for potential jurors failing to appear, compensation is one reason identified in  
23 many studies. Consequently, King County's low appearance rate could be improved by  
24 increasing compensation to the level allowed by state statute, thereby increasing the juror  
25 pool, benefiting both defendants facing jury trials and increasing the efficiency of the  
26 county's criminal justice system;

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

28 The county executive, in cooperation with the superior and district courts, should  
29 develop for incorporation in the 2002 Budget, a plan to increase juror compensation. The  
30 plan should incorporate the need to balance the fiscal demands of increasing  
31 compensation with the need to increase juror participation. The plan should consider  
32 whether the amount of compensation can be increased at once, in increments over a defined  
33 timeframe, or for certain types of service. The plan should also include recommendations  
34 for alternative means of developing new resources for the increased payments. The plan  
35 should address civil and other court fee increases, identify other revenue sources, or

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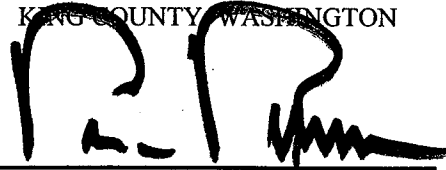
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36 examine whether reducing other court related costs that would defray any increased costs  
37 associated with higher juror compensation.

Motion 11131 was introduced on 1/29/01 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 3/19/01, by the following vote:

Yes: 11 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Miller, Ms. Fimia, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Pelz,  
Mr. McKenna, Mr. Nickels, Mr. Pullen, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague and Mr.  
Irons  
No: 0  
Excused: 1 - Ms. Sullivan

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY WASHINGTON



Pete von Reichbauer, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments      None