

SB 484 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

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Meeting Dates: 1/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure increases the claim limit to \$20,000 for civil actions permitted to be filed in small claims court.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Small claims provide less formal hearings and trials than regular circuit court proceedings, with the object of providing prompt and economical conclusion of disputes. Small claims court is currently mandatory when the value claimed is under \$750, and optional up to a claimed value of \$10,000 unless the defendant has a right to and requests a jury trial. Absent the judge's consent, an attorney is not allowed participate in small claims court for a client. Some courts operate special mediation programs for small claims. Judgments from small claims proceedings are not appealable and have the full force and effect as regular circuit court judgments.