



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE
STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT
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This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number:	H. 3696	Amended by Senate Judiciary on April 30, 2021
Author:	Lucas	
Subject:	Increase in Number of Circuit Court and Family Court Judges	
Requestor:	Senate Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Gardner	
Impact Date:	May 5, 2021	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This amended bill increases the number of circuit court judges and family court judges elected in South Carolina by four and two, respectively. The Judicial Department indicates that the General Fund expenditure impact for these six new judges and their associated staff and operating expenses will be \$3,313,302 in the first year of implementation and \$3,190,302 each year thereafter. There will be no expenditure impact for Other Funds or Federal Funds.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Amended by Senate Judiciary on April 30, 2021

State Expenditure

This amended bill increases the number of circuit court judges and family court judges elected in South Carolina. Currently, there are a total of thirty-three circuit court judges and fifty-two family court judges elected from the state's existing sixteen judicial circuits. The bill would expand the number of circuit court judges by four to thirty-seven by requiring one additional circuit court judge to be elected from the second (increasing from one to two), ninth (increasing from three to four), fourteenth (increasing from two to three), and fifteenth (increasing from two to three) judicial circuits. The bill would also expand the number of family court judges by two to fifty-four by requiring one additional family court judge to be elected from the first (increasing from three to four) and the sixteenth (increasing from two to three) judicial circuits.

Judicial Department. This amended bill, which increases both the number of circuit court and family court judges elected from the state's sixteen judicial circuits, would expand personnel and operating needs in the first, second, ninth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth circuits. This would require the department to hire, in addition to the six new judges, four law clerks, six administrative assistants, and six court reporters, for a total of twenty-two new FTEs. In addition, the department would need funding to cover expanded operating expenses. The department anticipates these needs will result in a recurring General Fund expenditure impact of \$3,026,302 to cover the new positions and \$164,000 to cover operating expenses. Additionally, the agency will incur a non-recurring General Fund expenditure impact of \$123,000 to cover one-time expenses for furniture, equipment, and automation. Therefore, the overall General Fund expenditure impact of the bill would be \$3,313,302 for the first year of implementation and \$3,190,302 in the years thereafter.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

N/A

Local Revenue

N/A

Introduced on January 14, 2021

State Expenditure

This bill increases the number of circuit court judges and family court judges elected in South Carolina. Currently, there are a total of thirty-three circuit court judges and fifty-two family court judges elected from the state's existing sixteen judicial circuits. The bill would expand the number of circuit court judges by three to thirty-six by requiring one additional circuit court judge to be elected from the ninth (increasing from three to four), fourteenth (increasing from two to three), and fifteenth (increasing from two to three) judicial circuits. The bill would also expand the number of family court judges by two to fifty-four by requiring one additional family court judge to be elected from the first (increasing from three to four) and the sixteenth (increasing from two to three) judicial circuits.

Judicial Department. This bill, which increases both the number of circuit court and family court judges elected from the state's sixteen judicial circuits, would expand personnel and operating needs in the first, ninth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth circuits. This would require the department to hire, in addition to the five new judges, three law clerks, five administrative assistants, and five court reporters, for a total of eighteen new FTEs. In addition, the department would need funding to cover expanded operating expenses. The department anticipates these needs will result in a recurring General Fund expenditure impact of \$2,491,339 to cover the new positions and \$136,000 to cover operating expenses. Additionally, the agency will incur a non-recurring General Fund expenditure impact of \$101,000 to cover one-time expenses for furniture, equipment, and automation. Therefore, the overall General Fund expenditure impact of the bill would be \$2,728,339 for the first year of implementation and \$2,627,339 in the years thereafter.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

N/A

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director