

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2019

As Engrossed: S4/3/19 H4/5/19
A Bill

SENATE BILL 658

By: Senator Hester

For An Act To Be Entitled

*AN ACT CONCERNING CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES AND THE
JUDICIARY; TO PROVIDE FOR ADDITIONAL CIRCUIT
JUDGESHIPS FOR CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS; TO PROVIDE
FOR A STUDY CONCERNING THE ALLOCATION OF CIRCUIT
JUDGES STATEWIDE; TO MAKE TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS; TO
DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.*

Subtitle

CONCERNING CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES,
PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS, AND THE JUDICIARY;
AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 16-13-1003, concerning the Second Judicial District, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(f) There is created in the Second Judicial District an additional circuit judgeship that shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate, and juvenile matters.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 16-13-1203, concerning the Fourth Judicial District, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(c) There is created in the Fourth Judicial District an additional circuit judgeship that shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate, and juvenile matters.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 16-13-2003, concerning the Twelfth Judicial



District, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(e) There is created in the Twelfth Judicial District an additional circuit judgeship that shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate, and juvenile matters.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 16-13-2903 is amended to read as follows:
16-13-2903. ~~Election of~~ Circuit court judges.

(a) The qualified electors of the Twenty-first Judicial District shall elect two (2) ~~circuit chancery~~ circuit judges.

(b) There is created in the Twenty-first Judicial District a circuit judgeship in addition to the judgeships created under subsection (a) of this section that shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate, and juvenile matters.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 16-13-3002, concerning the Nineteenth Judicial District-West, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(i) There is created in the Nineteenth Judicial District-West an additional circuit judgeship that shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate, and juvenile matters.

SECTION 6. DO NOT CODIFY. Temporary legislation.

For the circuit judgeships created in the Second, Fourth, and Nineteenth-West Judicial Circuits the vacancies shall be filled by election at the 2020 preferential primary election, with the elected circuit judge to take office on January 1, 2021.

SECTION 7. DO NOT CODIFY. Temporary legislation.

(a) For the circuit judgeships being created in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit and the Twenty-first Judicial Circuit, the Governor shall appoint qualified persons who are residents of the judicial districts that are the subject of this act to temporarily fill the newly created circuit court judgeships, and each of the appointed persons shall serve until January 1, 2021, or until a successor has been elected and qualified.

(b)(1) The qualified electors of the applicable judicial districts shall elect the additional circuit court judges whose judgeships are created

by this act at the 2020 preferential primary election, to take office on January 1, 2021.

(2) The additional circuit court judges shall be elected from within the judicial district, shall satisfy the same qualifications for holding office, and shall receive the same salary, expenses, and other allowances as provided by existing law for judges of the circuit courts.

(3) The circuit court judges shall serve for elected terms of six (6) years.

(c) The counties receiving a new circuit court judgeship shall provide courtroom and office facilities and supplies, which shall be paid for as provided by law.

SECTION 8. DO NOT CODIFY. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE.

(a) The House Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee shall conduct a joint study on the composition of the judicial circuits and allocation of circuit court judgeships statewide and issue recommendations concerning the reassignment of judicial circuits and the reapportionment of circuit court judgeships, if necessary, to the General Assembly for consideration during the 2021 Regular Session.

(b) The recommendations, if any, under this section shall be made no later than September 1, 2020, in order to be available for potential budgetary considerations during hearings of the Joint Budget Committee before the 2021 Regular Session.

SECTION 9. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that certain judicial districts under this act have an immediate need for additional circuit court judges due to the number of cases pending in the judicial district. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and all Sections except Section 2 of this act being necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on July 1, 2019.

/s/Hester