

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB443

Patron: Hope

Bill Title: Maximum number of judges in each judicial district and circuit.

Bill Summary: Increases by one the maximum number of authorized juvenile and domestic relations district court judges in the Twelfth and Fifteenth Judicial Districts. The bill also increases by one the maximum number of authorized general district court judges in the Twelfth and Twenty-sixth Judicial Districts. Finally, the bill increases by one the maximum number of authorized circuit court judges in the Twentieth and Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuits. This bill is a recommendation of the Committee on District Courts and the Judicial Council of Virginia.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes

Items Impacted: 33, 34 & 35

Explanation: The provisions of the bill require additional positions and associated funding to the Circuit Courts, General District Courts, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts

Fiscal Summary: According to the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the estimated cost for the four additional district court judgeships and two additional circuit court judgeships would be \$1,992,210 in the first year and \$1,967,610 for every subsequent year.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
Circuit Courts		\$703,698	\$695,498	\$695,498	\$695,498	\$695,498
General District Courts		\$644,256	\$636,056	\$636,056	\$636,056	\$636,056
Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts		\$644,256	\$636,056	\$636,056	\$636,056	\$636,056
TOTAL	\$1,992,210	\$1,967,610	\$1,967,610	\$1,967,610	\$1,967,610	\$1,967,610

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Position Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
Circuit Courts	2	2	2	2	2	2
General District Courts	2	2	2	2	2	2
Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	6	6	6	6	6	6

Fiscal Analysis:

The provisions of the bill would increase the authorized number of judgeships in the general district court in the Twelfth and Twenty-sixth Judicial Districts from five to six, adding two additional judges to the General District Courts system. The authorized juvenile and domestic relations district court judgeships would be increased in the Twelfth Judicial District from six to seven, and in the Fifteenth Judicial District from nine to ten, adding two additional judges to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts system. The number of authorized circuit court judgeships would be increased in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit from five to six, and in the Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuit from six to seven, adding two additional judges to the Circuit Court system. The total number of additional judges to be added to the courts system as a result of the bill is six additional judges.

According to the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the estimated cost for a single district court judgeship in the first year is \$322,128, which includes the expense to equip chambers. The estimated cost for every subsequent year is \$318,028. The estimated cost for a single circuit court judgeship in the first year is \$351,849, which includes the expense to equip chambers. The estimated cost for every subsequent year is \$347,749. Therefore, the estimated cost for the four additional district court judgeships and two additional circuit court judgeships would be \$1,992,210 in the first year and \$1,967,610 for every subsequent year.

- **General District Court (114):**
 - **First Year Impact:** \$644,256 total - \$304,440 to cover salary and benefit costs for each judge (2), \$12,487 per substitute judge, \$1,101 average travel cost for substitute judge, and \$4,100 in one-time expenses to equip chambers for both judges.
 - **Annual Ongoing Impact:** (Starting from the second year onward): \$636,056 total - \$304,440 to cover salary and benefit costs for each additional judge (2), \$11,600 per substitute judge.
- **General District Court (115):**
 - **First Year Impact:** \$644,256 total- \$304,440 to cover salary and benefit costs for each judge (2), \$12,487 per substitute judge, \$1,101 average travel cost for substitute judge, and \$4,100 in one-time expenses to equip chambers for both judges.

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- **Annual Ongoing Impact:** (Starting from the second year onward): \$636,056 total - \$304,440 to cover salary and benefit costs for each additional judge (2), \$11,600 per substitute judge.
- **Circuit Court (113):**
 - **First Year Impact:** \$703,698 total per judge (2) - \$334,044 to cover salary and benefit costs for each additional judge, \$12,205 per substitute judge for each additional judge, \$1,500 per clerk hire, and \$4,100 in one-time expenses to equip chambers per judge.
 - **Annual Ongoing Impact** (Starting from the second year onward): \$695,498 total per judge (2) - \$334,044 to cover salary and benefit costs for each additional judge (2), \$12,205 for a substitute judge for each additional judge, \$1,500 for each clerk hire per judge.

Other: None.