**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 14‑5‑610, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE DIVISION OF THE STATE INTO SIXTEEN JUDICIAL CIRCUITS AND ADDITIONAL AT‑LARGE JUDGES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AT‑LARGE CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES FROM SIXTEEN TO SEVENTEEN; AND TO AMEND SECTION 63‑3‑40, RELATING TO FAMILY COURT JUDGES ELECTED FROM EACH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AND ADDITIONAL AT‑LARGE JUDGES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AT‑LARGE FAMILY COURT JUDGES FROM EIGHT TO TEN.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 14‑5‑610(C) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(C) In addition to the above judges authorized by this section, there must be ~~sixteen~~ seventeen additional circuit judges elected by the General Assembly from the State at large for terms of office of six years. These additional judges must be elected without regard to county or circuit of residence. Each office of the at‑large judges is a separate office and is assigned numerical designations of Seat No. 1 through Seat No. ~~16~~ 17, respectively.”

SECTION 2. Section 63‑3‑40(D) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(D) In addition to the judges authorized by this section, there must be ~~eight~~ ten additional family court judges elected by the General Assembly from the State at large for terms of office of six years. These additional judges must be elected without regard to county or circuit of residence. Each office of the at‑large judges is a separate office and is assigned numerical designations of Seat No. 1 through Seat No. ~~8~~ 10, respectively.”

SECTION 3. The Judicial Merit Selection Commission shall begin the process of nominating candidates for the judicial offices authorized by the provisions of SECTIONS 1 and 2, and the General Assembly then shall elect these judges from the nominees of the commission; except that, the nominating process may not begin until funding for the additional judges is provided in the general appropriations act.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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