**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 4160**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. W. Newton, G.M. Smith, Jordan, Caskey, Bannister, Pope, Mitchell and Yow

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Introduced in the House on March 6, 2025

Introduced in the Senate on April 9, 2025

Last Amended on April 8, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate

Summary: Judicial seats, circuit court

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 3/6/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 7)

 3/6/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** (House Journal‑page 7)

 3/27/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Pope

 4/2/2025 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Judiciary** (House Journal‑page 7)

 4/8/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Mitchell, Yow

 4/8/2025 House Amended (House Journal‑page 32)

 4/8/2025 House Read second time (House Journal‑page 32)

 4/8/2025 House Roll call Yeas-106 Nays-0 (House Journal‑page 37)

 4/9/2025 House Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal‑page 22)

 4/9/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 6)

 4/9/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** (Senate Journal‑page 6)

 4/29/2025 Senate Committee report: Favorable **Judiciary** (Senate Journal‑page 18)

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/06/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4160_20250306.docx)

[04/02/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4160_20250402.docx)

[04/08/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4160_20250408.docx)

[04/29/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4160_20250429.docx)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

Committee Report

April 29, 2025

H. 4160

Introduced by Reps. W. Newton, G. M. Smith, Jordan, Caskey, Bannister, Pope, Mitchell and Yow

S. Printed 4/29/25--S.

Read the first time April 9, 2025

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The committee on Senate Judiciary

To whom was referred a Bill (H. 4160) to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by amending Section 14‑5‑610, relating to the division of the state into sixteen judicial circuits, the number of judges, etc., respectfully

Report:

That they have duly and carefully considered the same, and recommend that the same do pass:

LUKE RANKIN for Committee.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 14‑5‑610, RELATING TO THE DIVISION OF THE STATE INTO SIXTEEN JUDICIAL CIRCUITS, THE NUMBER OF JUDGES TO BE ELECTED FROM EACH CIRCUIT, AND THE ELECTION OF AT‑LARGE JUDGES WITHOUT REGARD TO COUNTY OR CIRCUIT OF RESIDENCE, SO AS TO CONVERT FIVE AT‑LARGE CIRCUIT COURT SEATS TO RESIDENT SEATS IN THE THIRD, SEVENTH, NINTH, ELEVENTH, AND TWELFTH CIRCUITS.

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

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

 Section 14‑5‑610. (A) The State is divided into sixteen judicial circuits as follows:

 (1) The first circuit is composed of the counties of Calhoun, Dorchester, and Orangeburg.

 (2) The second circuit is composed of the counties of Aiken, Bamberg, and Barnwell.

 (3) The third circuit is composed of the counties of Clarendon, Lee, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

 (4) The fourth circuit is composed of the counties of Chesterfield, Darlington, Marlboro, and Dillon.

 (5) The fifth circuit is composed of the counties of Kershaw and Richland.

 (6) The sixth circuit is composed of the counties of Chester, Lancaster, and Fairfield.

 (7) The seventh circuit is composed of the counties of Cherokee and Spartanburg.

 (8) The eighth circuit is composed of the counties of Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, and Newberry.

 (9) The ninth circuit is composed of the counties of Charleston and Berkeley.

 (10) The tenth circuit is composed of the counties of Anderson and Oconee.

 (11) The eleventh circuit is composed of the counties of Lexington, McCormick, Saluda, and Edgefield.

 (12) The twelfth circuit is composed of the counties of Florence and Marion.

 (13) The thirteenth circuit is composed of the counties of Greenville and Pickens.

 (14) The fourteenth circuit is composed of the counties of Allendale, Hampton, Colleton, Jasper, and Beaufort.

 (15) The fifteenth circuit is composed of the counties of Georgetown and Horry.

 (16) The sixteenth circuit is composed of the counties of York and Union.

 (B) One judge must be elected from the sixth and twelfth circuitscircuit. Two judges must be elected from the first, second, third, fourth, seventh, eighth, tenth, eleventh, and sixteenth circuits. Three judges must be elected from the third, fifth, seventh, eleventh, twelfth, fourteenth, and fifteenth circuits. Four judges must be elected from the ninth and thirteenth circuits. Five judges must be elected from the fifth, ninth, and thirteenth circuits.

 (C) In addition to the above judges authorized by this section, there must be sixteenseven 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. 167, respectively.

SECTION 2. (A) Upon the effective date of this act:

 (1) At‑large Circuit Court Seat 1 is converted to a resident seat and designated Third Circuit Court Seat 3;

 (2) At-large Circuit Court Seat 4 is converted to a resident seat and designated Thirteenth Circuit Court Seat 5;

 (3) At‑large Circuit Court Seats 6 and 12 are converted to resident seats and designated Twelfth Circuit Court Seats 2 and 3, respectively;

 (4) At-large Circuit Court Seats 8 and 10 are converted to resident seats and designated Fifth Circuit Court Seats 4 and 5, respectively;

 (5) At‑large Circuit Court Seat 9 is converted to a resident seat and designated Ninth Circuit Court Seat 5;

 (6) At‑large Circuit Court Seat 13 is converted to a resident seat and designated Eleventh Circuit Court Seat 3; and

 (7) At‑large Circuit Court Seat 14 is converted to a resident seat and designated Seventh Circuit Seat 3.

 (B) Nothing in this act may be construed to require a judge currently serving in an at‑large circuit court seat which is converted to a resident circuit court seat pursuant to this act to undergo additional screening until the end of the term for which they were screened and duly elected to an at‑large circuit court seat.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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