



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

WWW.RFA.SC.GOV • (803)734-3793

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. 4711	Introduced on January 13, 2026
Subject:	Additional Circuit Court Judges	
Requestor:	House Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Gardner	
Impact Date:	March 25, 2026	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill creates three new circuit court judges' seats, one additional seat each in the fifth, sixth, and fifteenth circuit. The nominating process for these new judges may not begin until funding for the additional judges is provided in the general appropriations act.

This bill will increase annual expenses for Judicial by \$2,200,000 beginning in FY 2026-27. This includes salary and fringe expenses for 12.0 FTEs; 3.0 circuit court judges, 3.0 administrative assistants, 3.0 court reports, and 3.0 law clerks totaling \$1,975,000 and annual operating costs totaling \$225,000. To note, Judicial requested additional General Fund appropriations for new circuit court judges in their FY 2026-27 budget request, and the Appropriations Act for FY 2026-27 as passed by the House of Representatives on March 11, 2026, provides appropriations for three new circuit court judges.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 13, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill increases the number of circuit court judges elected in South Carolina. Currently, there are a total of fifty-three circuit court judges serving within the state, forty-six designated seats and seven at-large seats. This bill creates three new circuit court judges' seats, one additional seat each in the fifth, sixth, and fifteenth circuit. The nominating process for these new judges may not begin until funding for the additional judges is provided in the general appropriations act.

Judicial indicates this bill will increase annual expenses by \$2,200,000 beginning in FY 2026-27. This includes salary and fringe for 12.0 FTEs totaling \$1,975,000 and annual operating costs totaling \$225,000. The following table provides the salary and fringe expenses for the new FTEs.

	Positions	Salary	Fringe	Total
Judge	3	\$665,775	\$469,225	\$1,135,000
Admin. Assistant	3	\$125,000	\$70,000	\$195,000
Court Reporter	3	\$215,000	\$120,000	\$335,000
Law Clerk	3	\$200,000	\$110,000	\$310,000
Total	12	\$1,205,775	\$769,225	\$1,975,000

To note, Judicial requested additional General Fund appropriations for new circuit court judges in their FY 2026-27 budget request, and the Appropriations Act for FY 2026-27 as passed by the House of Representatives on March 11, 2026, provides appropriations for three new circuit court judges.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

N/A

Local Revenue

N/A

Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director