



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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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. 4805	Introduced on January 13, 2026
Subject:	Judicial Seats	
Requestor:	House Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Gardner	
Impact Date:	March 24, 2026	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill shifts 4 at-large family court judges' seats to designated circuit family court seats. This bill also adds an additional designated circuit court judge to the first, eighth, and third circuit, increasing the number of circuit judges elected from a specific circuit by 3.

Additionally, there are currently 7 at-large circuit court seats. Section 2 of this bill specifies at-large circuit seats 1, 4, and 7 are to be converted to designated circuit court seats. However, §14-5-610 (C) specifies that there must be 7 additional circuit court judges elected to serve at-large with assigned numerical designations of seat number 1 through seat number 4. It is unclear whether this bill shifts 4 at-large circuit court judges' seats to designated circuit court seats or adds 3 new circuit court judges.

If this bill is shifting both family court and circuit court at-large seats to designated seats, Judicial indicates this bill will have no expenditure impact. Shifting seats from large to designated creates no new judges' seats and can be managed within the normal course of business for Judicial.

However, if this bill creates 3 new circuit court judges' seats, 1 additional seat each in the first, eighth, and third circuit, this bill will increase annual expenses for Judicial by \$2,200,000 beginning in FY 2026-27. This includes salary and fringe expenses for 3 new circuit court judges, 3 administrative assistants, 3 court reports, and 3 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 3 new circuit court judges.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 13, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill shifts 4 at-large family court judges' seats to designated circuit family court seats. This bill also adds an additional designated circuit court judge to the first, eighth, and third circuit, increasing the number of circuit judges elected from a specific circuit by 3.

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However, if this bill creates 3 new circuit court judges' seats, 1 additional seat each in the first, eighth, and third circuit, 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

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State Revenue

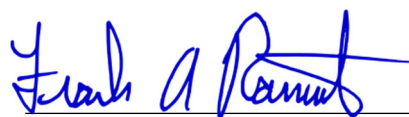
N/A

Local Expenditure

N/A

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director