

SB 1541 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 02/08/24

Action: Do pass and refer to Ways and Means by prior reference.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Gelser Blouin, Linthicum, Manning Jr, Prozanski, Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact, statement issued (Indeterminate Impact)

Prepared By: Amie Fender-Sosa, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/5, 2/6, 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The Act creates one additional circuit court judge position in Jackson County and one additional circuit court judge position in Washington County in July 2024. It also creates one additional circuit court judge position in Clackamas County in July 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Jackson, Washington and Clackamas have growing communities and are severely understaffed.
- Clackamas County would receive their judicial position in 2025 because its courthouse has not yet been finished.
- OJD Judicial workload study showed Washington County needs four additional judges.
- The unrepresented criminal defendant crisis has increased judge workloads and requires extra coordination.
- Interpretation needs have increased, which increases hearing length.
- Clackamas county has 11 judges, and it is the third largest county in Oregon with 10 percent of the state's population.
- The practice of stacking trials and continuing them, associated costs, permanency delays, public safety concerns.
- Access to justice is delayed.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The number of judicial positions allocated to each county is determined by the legislature and specified in ORS 3.012. According to the US Census Bureau, Jackson County has a population of approximately 221,644 and 10 judges. Washington County has a population of approximately 600,176 and 15 judges. Clackamas County has a population of approximately 423,177 and 11 judges. HB 1541 would add one judge to each of these counties.