



Legislative Fiscal Office
 83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly
 2025 Regular Session

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Bill Title: Relating to judicial positions; declaring an emergency.

Government Unit(s) Affected: Counties, Judicial Department, Secretary of State

Summary of Fiscal Impact

2025-27 Biennium	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	FTE
Oregon Judicial Department	\$ 8,329,890	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,329,890	30	26.13
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ 8,329,890	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,329,890	30	26.13

2027-29 Biennium	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	FTE
Oregon Judicial Department	\$ 9,732,770	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,732,770	30	30.00
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ 9,732,770	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,732,770	30	30.00

Measure Description

The measure increases the number of statutory circuit court judgeships, by a total of six, across five judicial districts. Statewide, the total number of statutory circuit court judgeships under the measure would increase from 182 to 189 positions. Previously, SB 1541 (2024) increased the number of statutory circuit court judgeships in Clackamas County, which will be operative July 1, 2025, during the effective date of this measure. The measure allows for the Governor and the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) to take any action regarding the increase of the Circuit Court Judgeship in Crook and Jefferson County before the operative date of October 1, 2025.

The measure takes effect upon passage, with an operative date for the Crook and Jefferson Circuit Court Judgeships being October 1, 2025, and the Lane, Clackamas, Morrow, Umatilla, and Douglas Circuit Court judgeships beginning January 1, 2026. Changes are summarized below:

- Twenty-second Judicial District (Crook and Jefferson County) - increases the number of judgeships from three to four (1), effective October 1, 2025;
- Second Judicial District (Lane County) - increases the number of judgeships from 15 to 17 (2), effective January 1, 2026;
- Fifth Judicial District (Clackamas County) - increases the number of judgeships from 12 to 13 (1), effective January 1, 2026;
- Sixth Judicial District (Morrow and Umatilla County) - increases the number of judgeships from five to six (1), effective January 1, 2026; and

- Sixteenth Judicial District (Douglas County) - increases the number of judgeships from five to six (1), effective January 1, 2026.

The fiscal impact associated with establishing a statutory circuit court judgeship may include: (a) the cost of the judgeship position; (b) circuit court support staff; (c) county courthouse and/or facility costs for judge chambers, court staff, and potentially an additional courtroom; and (d) election cost.

Fiscal Analysis

The fiscal impact is estimated to be \$8.3 million General Fund and 30 positions (26.13 FTE) in the 2025-27 biennium and \$9.7 million General Fund and 30 positions (30.00 FTE) in the 2027-29 biennium.

Oregon Judicial Department

The fiscal impact of the measure on OJD is \$8.3 million General Fund and 30 positions (26.13 FTE) in the 2025-27 biennium and \$9.7 million General Fund and 30 positions (30.00 FTE) in the 2027-29 biennium. The fiscal impact of this measure is based on the current compensation plan for statutory judgeships, which includes cost-of-living increases, and would increase with any change in judicial compensation (e.g., SB 96, 2025).

For Crook and Jefferson Circuit Courts, the fiscal impact includes one judgeship (0.88 FTE in 2025-27 and 1.00 FTE in 2027-29), one courtroom clerk (1.00 FTE in 2025-27 and 2027-29), two court operations specialists (2.00 FTE in 2025-27 and 2027-29), and one analyst 2 position (1.00 FTE in 2025-27 and 2027-29). Funding for the judgeship is based on an October 1, 2025, start date and court staff funding is based on a July 1, 2025, start date.

For Lane, Clackamas, Morrow, Umatilla, and Douglas Circuit Courts the fiscal impact includes five judgeships (3.75 FTE in 2025-27 and 5.00 FTE in 2027-29), five courtroom clerks (4.38 FTE in 2025-27 and 5.00 FTE in 2027-29), 10 court operations specialists (8.75 FTE in 2025-27 and 10.00 FTE in 2027-29), and five analyst 2 positions (4.38 FTE in 2025-27 and 5.00 FTE in 2027-29). Funding for the judgeships is based on a January 1, 2026, start date and court staff funding is based on an October 1, 2025, start date.

Each judgeship position has four court support staff to provide clerical and courtroom support. Support staff have a hire date three months prior to the judgeships coming on in order to allow for training.

The 2025-27 Chief Justice recommended budget contains Policy Option Package 108 which includes five judicial positions and 20 staff positions for \$6.9 million General Fund and 20.26 FTE, similar to this measure. The measure includes one additional judicial position and four staff in the Sixth Judicial District which is not reflected in the policy option package.

Secretary of State

The judges of the circuit courts are elected by voters in nonpartisan judicial district elections for six-year terms. Judge terms start in January of odd numbered years and while these positions will initially be appointed, the judgeships would have to stand for election at the next primary in May 2026. If elected, they would begin their six-year term in January 2027.

The agency is responsible for providing each judge slot a position number for election purposes and reports no fiscal impact associated with this measure.

Counties

By law, counties are responsible to provide suitable and sufficient court facilities for the statewide operation of the circuit courts. Newly established statutory circuit judgeships and associated circuit court staff require county courthouse and/or court facilities for judge chambers, court staff, and potentially an additional courtroom.

County governments report the costs to be minimal; however, the Legislative Fiscal Office notes that costs may be indeterminate due to the lack of courtroom and office space in certain circuit courts.

Relevant Dates

The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on passage, with an operative date for the Crook and Jefferson Circuit Court Judgeships being October 1, 2025, and the Lane, Clackamas, Morrow, Umatilla, and Douglas Circuit Court judgeships beginning January 1, 2026.