



Legislative Fiscal Office
83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly
2025 Regular Session

Prepared by: Chelsey Herrmann
Reviewed by: Amanda Beitel, John Borden, Paul Siebert
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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	\$ 5,431,420	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,431,420	20	17.00
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ 5,431,420	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,431,420	20	17.00

2027-29 Biennium	General Fund	Lottery Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	Positions	FTE
Oregon Judicial Department	\$ 6,493,118	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,493,118	20	20.00
Total Fiscal Impact	\$ 6,493,118	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,493,118	20	20.00

Measure Description

The measure increases the number of statutory circuit court judgeships, by a total of four, across three judicial districts. Statewide, the total number of statutory circuit court judgeships under the measure would increase from 182 to 187 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 Lane, Clackamas, and Douglas Circuit Court judgeships beginning January 1, 2026. Changes are summarized below:

- 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;
- 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 \$5.4 million General Fund and 20 positions (17.00 FTE) in the 2025-27 biennium and \$6.5 million General Fund and 20 positions (20.00 FTE) in the 2027-29 biennium.

Oregon Judicial Department

The fiscal impact of the measure on OJD is \$5.4 million General Fund and 20 positions (17.00 FTE) in the 2025-27 biennium and \$6.5 million General Fund and 20 positions (20.00 FTE) in the 2027-29 biennium. The fiscal impact of this measure is based on the current compensation plan for statutory judgeships; however, the measure includes a \$166,256 General Fund appropriation related to an increase in judicial compensation if HB 2712 (2025) becomes law. The 2027-29 biennium totals \$6.5 million General Fund and 20 positions (20.00 FTE).

For Lane, Clackamas, and Douglas Circuit Courts the fiscal impact includes four judgeships (3.00 FTE in 2025-27 and 4.00 FTE in 2027-29), four courtroom clerks (3.50 FTE in 2025-27 and 4.00 FTE in 2027-29), eight court operations specialists (7.00 FTE in 2025-27 and 8.00 FTE in 2027-29), and four analyst 2 positions (3.50 FTE in 2025-27 and 4.00 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.

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 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 circuit courts.

Relevant Dates

The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on passage, with an operative date for the Lane, Clackamas, and Douglas Circuit Court judgeships beginning January 1, 2026.