

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to judges; amending s. 26.031, F.S.;
3 revising the number of circuit court judges in certain
4 circuits; amending s. 34.022, F.S.; revising the
5 number of county court judges in certain counties;
6 providing for the election of new circuit and county
7 court judges created by the act in the 2018 general
8 election; providing qualifying dates for these
9 positions; providing elimination dates for the
10 decertified positions; providing legislative findings;
11 providing that the circuit and county court judicial
12 offices created by the act constitute vacancies in
13 office for purposes of qualifying for the 2018 general
14 election; providing appropriations and authorizing
15 positions; providing an effective date.

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17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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19 Section 1. Subsection (9) of section 26.031, Florida
20 Statutes, is amended to read:

21 26.031 Judicial circuits; number of judges.—The number of
22 circuit judges in each circuit shall be as follows:

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT	TOTAL
(9) Ninth.....	<u>45</u> 43

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26 Section 2. Subsections (1), (5), (8), (11), (16), (28),
 27 (36), (44), (51), (53), and (54) of section 34.022, Florida
 28 Statutes, is amended to read:

29 34.022 Number of county court judges for each county.—The
 30 number of county court judges in each county shall be as
 31 follows:

32 COUNTY	TOTAL
33 (1) Alachua.....	<u>4</u> 5
34 (5) Brevard.....	<u>8</u> 11
35 (8) Charlotte.....	<u>2</u> 3
36 (11) Collier.....	<u>5</u> 6
37 (16) Escambia.....	<u>4</u> 5
38 (28) Hillsborough.....	<u>19</u> 17
39 (36) Leon.....	<u>4</u> 5
40 (44) Monroe.....	<u>3</u> 4
41 (51) Pasco.....	<u>5</u> 7
42 (53) Polk.....	<u>9</u> 10
43 (54) Putnam.....	<u>1</u> 2

44
 45 Section 3. (1) The Governor may not fill the circuit and
 46 county court judicial offices created in sections 1 and 2 of
 47 this act by appointment, but those offices shall be filled by
 48 election in the 2018 general election pursuant to chapter 105,
 49 Florida Statutes. Candidates for the circuit and county court
 50 judicial offices created in sections 1 and 2 of this act shall

51 qualify as provided in chapter 105, Florida Statutes, except
 52 that candidates qualifying under this act shall qualify no
 53 earlier than noon of the 50th day, and no later than noon of the
 54 46th day, before the primary election.

55 (2) The Legislature finds that an emergency does not exist
 56 and the public business does not require immediate appointment
 57 of the circuit and county court judicial offices created in
 58 sections 1 and 2 of this act.

59 (3) The circuit and county court judicial offices created
 60 in sections 1 and 2 of this act constitute vacancies in office
 61 for purposes of qualifying for the 2018 general election.

62 (4) The terms of the circuit and county court judicial
 63 offices created in sections 1 and 2 of this act shall begin on
 64 January 8, 2019.

65 (5) The county court judicial offices decertified in
 66 section 2 of this act shall be eliminated upon the expiration of
 67 the next judicial term, as provided in s. 9, Article V of the
 68 State Constitution.

69 (6) In the event there are a greater number of county court
 70 judicial offices with terms expiring on the same day than the
 71 number of decertifications, the Chief Justice of the Supreme
 72 Court shall determine which specific county court judicial
 73 offices will be eliminated in each of the counties subject to
 74 judicial decertification.

75 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.