

1 State of Arkansas  
2 94th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2023  
4

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 437

5 By: Senator B. Davis  
6

## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE FIFTH JUDICIAL  
9 DISTRICT; TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL CIRCUIT  
10 JUDGESHIP; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
11

## Subtitle

12  
13 TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE FIFTH  
14 JUDICIAL DISTRICT; AND TO PROVIDE FOR AN  
15 ADDITIONAL CIRCUIT JUDGESHIP.  
16  
17  
18

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
20

21 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and intent.

22 (a) The General Assembly finds that the Judicial Resources Assessment  
23 Committee has:

24 (1) Reviewed the caseloads of various judicial districts; and

25 (2) Determined that to ensure the smooth, efficient, and timely  
26 administration of justice, one (1) additional circuit judgeship is needed in  
27 the Fifth Judicial District.

28 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that this act:

29 (1) Authorizes the establishment of one (1) additional circuit  
30 judgeship;

31 (2) Articulates the applicable election process for the  
32 additional circuit judge; and

33 (3) Identifies various resources that will be available to the  
34 additional circuit judge.  
35

36 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 16-13-1303 is amended to read as follows:



1 16-13-1303. Judges ~~and chancellors.~~

2 ~~The qualified electors of the~~ The qualified electors of the Fifth  
 3 Judicial District shall elect:

4 ~~(1) One (1) circuit judge;~~

5 ~~(2) One (1) chancellor;~~

6 ~~(3)(A) One (1) circuit chancery judge.~~

7 ~~(B)(i) Each judge of the judgeship created by subdivision~~  
 8 ~~(3)(A) of this section shall be the judge of the juvenile division of~~  
 9 ~~chancery court.~~

10 ~~(ii) The judge shall serve as judge of the juvenile~~  
 11 ~~division in lieu of the judge who would otherwise be designated as judge of~~  
 12 ~~the juvenile division of chancery court in the judicial district.~~

13 ~~(C) The judge of the additional circuit chancery judgeship~~  
 14 ~~created in subdivision (3)(A) of this section shall devote such time as may~~  
 15 ~~be required to perform the duties of judge of the juvenile division, which~~  
 16 ~~duties shall be the primary obligation of the judge, and shall sit as judge~~  
 17 ~~of the circuit, chancery, or probate court as time permits; and~~

18 ~~(4)(A) An additional circuit chancery and juvenile judgeship~~  
 19 ~~which shall have jurisdiction in law, equity, and probate.~~

20 ~~(B) The additional judge shall be elected in the same~~  
 21 ~~manner and shall satisfy the same qualifications for holding office and shall~~  
 22 ~~receive the same salary, expenses, and other allowances as provided by law~~  
 23 ~~for judges of the circuit chancery courts.~~

24 ~~(C) The judge shall serve for elected terms of four (4)~~  
 25 ~~years~~ five (5) circuit judges that have jurisdiction in law, equity, probate,  
 26 and juvenile matters.

27  
 28 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 16, Chapter 13, Subchapter 13, is  
 29 amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

30 16-13-1305. Additional judgeship.

31 (a) In addition to the four (4) circuit judgeships existing on the  
 32 effective date of this act, there is created in the Fifth Judicial District  
 33 an additional circuit judgeship.

34 (b) The additional circuit judge shall:

35 (1) Be elected from the district;

36 (2) Satisfy the same qualifications for holding office as

1 provided by law for judges of the circuit courts; and

2 (3) Receive the same salary, expenses, and other allowances as  
3 provided by law for judges of the circuit courts.

4 (c) The additional circuit judge shall serve for an elected term of  
5 six (6) years.

6 (d)(1) The counties that compose the Fifth Judicial District shall  
7 provide courtroom and office facilities and supplies for the additional  
8 circuit judgeship.

9 (2) The requirements under subdivision (d)(1) of this section  
10 shall be paid for out of:

11 (A) The county treasuries in the same manner as other  
12 demands against the counties; and

13 (B) Funds appropriated by the respective quorum courts of  
14 the counties for these purposes.

15 (e)(1) A court reporter and a trial court administrator shall be  
16 provided for the additional circuit judgeship.

17 (2) The salaries of the court reporter and trial court  
18 administrator provided under subdivision (e)(1) of this section shall be:

19 (A) Fixed; and

20 (B) Paid in the manner provided by law for court reporters  
21 and trial court administrators of the circuit courts of this state.

22  
23 SECTION 4. DO NOT CODIFY. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE.

24 (a) The additional circuit judgeship in the Fifth Judicial District  
25 created under this act shall be filled by election at the 2024 nonpartisan  
26 judicial general election, with the elected circuit judge taking office on  
27 January 1, 2025.

28 (b) This act does not affect the election or terms of the four (4)  
29 circuit judges in the Fifth Judicial District existing on the effective date  
30 of this act.

31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36