

Senate Bill 272

By: Senator Jackson of the 2nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend an Act providing for a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County,  
2 approved March 31, 1987 (Ga. L. 1987, p. 5156), as amended, particularly by an Act  
3 approved March 27, 1998 (Ga. L. 1988, p. 3557), so as to revise the method of selection of  
4 the chief judge; to provide for a court administrator; to provide for court administrator  
5 responsibilities; to require a bond; to provide for personnel policies and procedures of  
6 employees of the court; to provide for the selection and approval of the judges pro tempore  
7 of the court; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 An Act providing for a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County, approved  
11 March 31, 1987 (Ga. L. 1987, p. 5156), as amended, particularly by an Act approved  
12 March 27, 1998 (Ga. L. 1988, p. 3557), is amended by deleting Section 1 in its entirety and  
13 enacting a new Section 1 to read as follows:

14 "SECTION 1.

15 (a) There shall be a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County. The chief judge  
16 shall:

- 17 (1) Act as the head of the court in all official functions;
- 18 (2) Consult with the court administrator in the preparation of an annual budget for the  
19 court which shall be submitted to the city manager of the City of Savannah and the  
20 county manager of Chatham County;
- 21 (3) Submit an annual report on the operations of the court to the city council of the City  
22 of Savannah and the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Such annual report shall  
23 include such data as may be outlined in any intergovernmental agreement or  
24 memorandum of understanding between the city and the county that funds the operations  
25 of the court;

26 (4) Advise and consult with the city manager and county manager in the hiring and  
27 termination of the court administrator; and

28 (5) Perform such other duties as may be required by law.

29 (b) The chief judge shall not have any authority or responsibility for the assignment of cases  
30 or caseloads.

31 (c)(1) Upon the satisfaction of the requirements of paragraph (2) of this subsection, the  
32 chief judge shall be elected by a majority vote of all judges of the Recorder's Court of  
33 Chatham County holding office. In the event of a tie as a result of the election, the judge  
34 who has served for the longest period of continuous time as judge shall be designated as  
35 chief judge. The chief judge shall serve as chief judge for a term of two years so long as  
36 he or she remains a judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County. A judge may  
37 succeed himself or herself for unlimited terms as chief judge and shall serve until his or  
38 her successor is elected as provided for in this paragraph.

39 (2) The chief judge in office on the effective date of this Act shall remain as chief judge  
40 so long as he or she remains a judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County.

41 (d)(1) There is created the position of court administrator of the Recorder's Court of  
42 Chatham County.

43 (2) The court administrator shall be an employee of the City of Savannah and shall report  
44 to and be supervised by the city manager so long as the city funds at least one-half of the  
45 court's operations; provided, however, that if the city funds less than one-half of the  
46 court's operations, the court administrator shall be an employee of Chatham County and  
47 shall report to and be supervised by the county manager.

48 (3) The court administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the city manager or county  
49 manager, as applicable, pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection; provided, however,  
50 that the city manager or county manager shall advise or consult with the chief judge in  
51 hiring, supervision, or discharge of the court administrator.

52 (4) The court administrator shall be responsible for:

53 (A) Hiring, supervising, investigating, and disciplining all employees of the court other  
54 than judges;

55 (B) The day-to-day operations of the court;

56 (C) Keeping the city manager or county manager, as applicable, pursuant to  
57 paragraph (2) of this subsection and the judges of the court fully informed as to the  
58 operations of the court;

59 (D) Managing the dockets of the court, assigning all cases to the judges, scheduling  
60 hearings, and administering all operations of the court;

61 (E) Maintaining such management reports as may be requested by the city manager or  
62 county manager, as applicable, pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection or the  
63 majority of sitting judges and submitting such reports to the requesting party;

64 (F) Consulting with all judges to the court on the preparation of an annual budget and  
65 submitting such annual budget to the city manager and the county manager; and

66 (G) Performing such other duties as may be assigned by the city manager or county  
67 manager, as applicable, pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.

68 (5) The court administrator shall be bonded in the amount of \$100,000.00 in the same  
69 manner and method as provided for the clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County.  
70 The cost of the premium for the bond shall be borne by the court.

71 (6) All employees of the court shall be employees of the City of Savannah and shall be  
72 subject to the personnel policies and procedures of the city, provided that the City of  
73 Savannah and Chatham County shall have the authority to provide by intergovernmental  
74 agreement that such employees shall be employees of Chatham County.

75 (e) The judges of the court may adopt rules, policies, or regulations upon majority vote of  
76 the judges seated so long as no rule, policy, or regulation adopted violates the powers and  
77 duties provided for in this Act or by other law.

78 (f) Judges pro tempore of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County shall be approved by a  
79 majority vote of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and by a majority vote of the  
80 city council of the City of Savannah."

81 **SECTION 2.**

82 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.