

CHAPTER 129**(HB 214)**

AN ACT relating to judicial districts and circuits and declaring an emergency.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 23A.020 is amended to read as follows:

The state is divided into judicial circuits, each to be composed of the following counties:

- (1) First Judicial Circuit. Ballard, Carlisle, Fulton, and Hickman.
- (2) Second Judicial Circuit. McCracken.
- (3) Third Judicial Circuit. Christian.
- (4) Fourth Judicial Circuit. Hopkins.
- (5) Fifth Judicial Circuit. Crittenden, Union, and Webster.
- (6) Sixth Judicial Circuit. Daviess.
- (7) Seventh Judicial Circuit. Logan and Todd.
- (8) Eighth Judicial Circuit. *Edmonson and* Warren.
- (9) Ninth Judicial Circuit. Hardin.
- (10) Tenth Judicial Circuit. Hart, Larue, and Nelson.
- (11) Eleventh Judicial Circuit. Green, Marion, Taylor, and Washington.
- (12) Twelfth Judicial Circuit. Henry, Oldham, and Trimble.
- (13) Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. Garrard and Jessamine.
- (14) Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. Bourbon, Scott, and Woodford.
- (15) Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. Carroll, Grant, and Owen.
- (16) Sixteenth Judicial Circuit. Kenton.
- (17) Seventeenth Judicial Circuit. Campbell.
- (18) Eighteenth Judicial Circuit. Harrison, Nicholas, Pendleton, and Robertson.
- (19) Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. Bracken, Fleming, and Mason.
- (20) Twentieth Judicial Circuit. Greenup and Lewis.
- (21) Twenty-first Judicial Circuit. Bath, Menifee, Montgomery, and Rowan.
- (22) Twenty-second Judicial Circuit. Fayette.
- (23) Twenty-third Judicial Circuit. Estill, Lee, and Owsley.
- (24) Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit. Lawrence, Johnson, and Martin.
- (25) Twenty-fifth Judicial Circuit. Clark and Madison.
- (26) Twenty-sixth Judicial Circuit. Harlan.
- (27) Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuit. Knox and Laurel.
- (28) Twenty-eighth Judicial Circuit. Lincoln, Pulaski, and Rockcastle.
- (29) Twenty-ninth Judicial Circuit. Adair and Casey.
- (30) Thirtieth Judicial Circuit. Jefferson.
- (31) Thirty-first Judicial Circuit. Floyd.

- (32) Thirty-second Judicial Circuit. Boyd.
- (33) Thirty-third Judicial Circuit. Perry.
- (34) Thirty-fourth Judicial Circuit. Whitley and McCreary.
- (35) Thirty-fifth Judicial Circuit. Pike.
- (36) Thirty-sixth Judicial Circuit. Magoffin and Knott.
- (37) Thirty-seventh Judicial Circuit. Carter, Elliott, and Morgan.
- (38) Thirty-eighth Judicial Circuit. Butler~~[-Edmonson]~~, Ohio, and Hancock.
- (39) Thirty-ninth Judicial Circuit. Breathitt, Wolfe, and Powell.
- (40) Fortieth Judicial Circuit. Clinton, Cumberland, and Monroe.
- (41) Forty-first Judicial Circuit. Clay, Jackson, and Leslie.
- (42) Forty-second Judicial Circuit. Calloway and Marshall.
- (43) Forty-third Judicial Circuit. Barren and Metcalfe.
- (44) Forty-fourth Judicial Circuit. Bell.
- (45) Forty-fifth Judicial Circuit. Muhlenberg and McLean.
- (46) Forty-sixth Judicial Circuit. Breckinridge, Grayson, and Meade.
- (47) Forty-seventh Judicial Circuit. Letcher.
- (48) Forty-eighth Judicial Circuit. Franklin.
- (49) Forty-ninth Judicial Circuit. Allen and Simpson.
- (50) Fiftieth Judicial Circuit. Boyle and Mercer.
- (51) Fifty-first Judicial Circuit. Henderson.
- (52) Fifty-second Judicial Circuit. Graves.
- (53) Fifty-third Judicial Circuit. Shelby, Anderson, and Spencer.
- (54) Fifty-fourth Judicial Circuit. Boone and Gallatin.
- (55) Fifty-fifth Judicial Circuit. Bullitt.
- (56) Fifty-sixth Judicial Circuit. Caldwell, Livingston, Lyon, and Trigg.
- (57) Fifty-seventh Judicial Circuit. Russell and Wayne.

➔Section 2. KRS 23A.040 (Effective January 2, 2023) is amended to read as follows:

The following judicial circuits are entitled to two (2) judges and shall have two (2) numbered divisions of the Circuit Court:

- (1) Fourth Judicial Circuit.
- (2) Fifth Judicial Circuit.
- (3) Tenth Judicial Circuit.
- (4) Eleventh Judicial Circuit.
- (5) Twelfth Judicial Circuit.
- (6) Thirteenth Judicial Circuit.
- (7) **Fifteenth Judicial Circuit.**
- (8) Eighteenth Judicial Circuit.
- ~~(9)~~~~(8)~~ Twentieth Judicial Circuit.
- ~~(10)~~~~(9)~~ Twenty-first Judicial Circuit.

- (11)~~(10)~~ Twenty-fourth Judicial Circuit.
- (12)~~(11)~~ Thirty-first Judicial Circuit.
- (13)~~(12)~~ Thirty-second Judicial Circuit.
- (14)~~(13)~~ Thirty-fourth Judicial Circuit.
- (15)~~(14)~~ Thirty-seventh Judicial Circuit.
- (16)~~(15)~~ Thirty-eighth Judicial Circuit.
- (17)~~(16)~~ Thirty-ninth Judicial Circuit.
- (18)~~(17)~~ Forty-first Judicial Circuit.
- (19)~~(18)~~ Forty-second Judicial Circuit.
- (20)~~(19)~~ Forty-third Judicial Circuit.
- (21)~~(20)~~ Forty-sixth Judicial Circuit.
- (22)~~(21)~~ Forty-ninth Judicial Circuit.
- (23)~~(22)~~ Fiftieth Judicial Circuit.
- (24)~~(23)~~ Fifty-first Judicial Circuit.
- (25)~~(24)~~ Fifty-third Judicial Circuit.
- (26) ***Fifty-sixth Judicial Circuit.***
- (27)~~(25)~~ Fifty-seventh Judicial Circuit.

➔Section 3. KRS 23A.045 (Effective January 2, 2023) is amended to read as follows:

The following judicial circuits are entitled to three (3) Circuit Judges and shall have three (3) numbered divisions of the Circuit Court:

- (1) Second Judicial Circuit.
- (2)~~(1) Third Judicial Circuit.~~
- (3)~~(2) Sixth Judicial Circuit.~~
- (4)~~(3) Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.~~
- (5)~~(4) Seventeenth Judicial Circuit.~~
- (3)~~(6) Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuit.~~
- (7)~~(5) Thirty-fifth Judicial Circuit.~~
- (4)~~(8) Forty-eighth Judicial Circuit.~~
- (5)~~(9) Fifty-fifth Judicial Circuit.~~

➔Section 4. KRS 23A.050 is amended to read as follows:

The following judicial circuits are entitled to four (4) judges and shall have four (4) numbered divisions of the Circuit Court:

- (1) ***Third***~~(Eight)~~ Judicial Circuit.
- (2) ***Sixth Judicial Circuit.***
- (3) Ninth Judicial Circuit.
- (4) ***Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.***
- (5)~~(3)~~ Twenty-~~seventh~~~~(fifth)~~ Judicial Circuit.
- (6)~~(4)~~ Twenty-eighth Judicial Circuit.
- (7)~~(5)~~ Fifty-fourth Judicial Circuit.

➔SECTION 5. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 23A IS CREATED TO BE NUMBERED AS KRS 23A.052 AND TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

The following judicial circuits are entitled to five (5) judges and shall have five (5) numbered divisions of the Circuit Court:

- (1) *Eighth Judicial Circuit.*
- (2) *Twenty-fifth Judicial Circuit.*

➔Section 6. KRS 23A.055 is amended to read as follows:

The Sixteenth Judicial Circuit is entitled to ~~six (6)~~~~{five (5)}~~ judges and shall have ~~six (6)~~~~{five (5)}~~ numbered divisions of the Circuit Court.

➔Section 7. KRS 24A.030 (Effective January 2, 2023) is amended to read as follows:

The state is divided into judicial districts, each to be composed of the following counties:

- (1) First Judicial District. Ballard, Carlisle, Fulton, and Hickman.
- (2) Second Judicial District. McCracken.
- (3) Third Judicial District. Christian.
- (4) Fourth Judicial District. Hopkins.
- (5) Fifth Judicial District. Crittenden, Union, and Webster.
- (6) Sixth Judicial District. Daviess.
- (7) Seventh Judicial District. Logan and Todd.
- (8) Eighth Judicial District. *Edmonson and* Warren.
- (9) Ninth Judicial District. Hardin.
- (10) Tenth Judicial District. Hart and Larue.
- (11) Eleventh Judicial District. Green, Marion, Taylor, and Washington.
- (12) Twelfth Judicial District. Henry, Oldham, and Trimble.
- (13) Thirteenth Judicial District. Garrard, Jessamine, and Lincoln.
- (14) Fourteenth Judicial District. Bourbon, Scott, and Woodford.
- (15) Fifteenth Judicial District. Carroll, Grant, and Owen.
- (16) Sixteenth Judicial District. Kenton.
- (17) Seventeenth Judicial District. Campbell.
- (18) Eighteenth Judicial District. Harrison, Nicholas, Pendleton, and Robertson.
- (19) Nineteenth Judicial District. Bracken, Fleming, and Mason.
- (20) Twentieth Judicial District. Greenup and Lewis.
- (21) Twenty-first Judicial District. Bath, Menifee, Montgomery, and Rowan.
- (22) Twenty-second Judicial District. Fayette.
- (23) Twenty-third Judicial District. Estill, Lee, and Owsley.
- (24) Twenty-fourth Judicial District. Lawrence, Johnson, and Martin.
- (25) Twenty-fifth Judicial District. Clark and Madison.
- (26) Twenty-sixth Judicial District. Harlan.
- (27) Twenty-seventh Judicial District. Knox and Laurel.
- (28) Twenty-eighth Judicial District. Pulaski and Rockcastle.
- (29) Twenty-ninth Judicial District. Adair and Casey.

- (30) Thirtieth Judicial District. Jefferson.
- (31) Thirty-first Judicial District. Floyd.
- (32) Thirty-second Judicial District. Boyd.
- (33) Thirty-third Judicial District. Perry.
- (34) Thirty-fourth Judicial District. Whitley and McCreary.
- (35) Thirty-fifth Judicial District. Pike.
- (36) Thirty-sixth Judicial District. Magoffin and Knott.
- (37) Thirty-seventh Judicial District. Carter, Elliott, and Morgan.
- (38) Thirty-eighth Judicial District. Butler, ~~Edmonson~~, Ohio, and Hancock.
- (39) Thirty-ninth Judicial District. Breathitt, Wolfe, and Powell.
- (40) Fortieth Judicial District. Clinton, Russell, and Wayne.
- (41) Forty-first Judicial District. Clay, Jackson, and Leslie.
- (42) Forty-second Judicial District. Calloway *and Marshall*.
- (43) Forty-third Judicial District. Barren and Metcalfe.
- (44) Forty-fourth Judicial District. Bell.
- (45) Forty-fifth Judicial District. Muhlenberg and McLean.
- (46) Forty-sixth Judicial District. Breckinridge, Grayson, and Meade.
- (47) Forty-seventh Judicial District. Letcher.
- (48) Forty-eighth Judicial District. Franklin.
- (49) Forty-ninth Judicial District. Allen and Simpson.
- (50) Fiftieth Judicial District. Boyle and Mercer.
- (51) Fifty-first Judicial District. Henderson.
- (52) Fifty-second Judicial District. Graves.
- (53) Fifty-third Judicial District. Shelby, Anderson, and Spencer.
- (54) Fifty-fourth Judicial District. Boone and Gallatin.
- (55) Fifty-fifth Judicial District. Bullitt.
- (56) Fifty-sixth Judicial District. Caldwell, Livingston, Lyon, and Trigg.
- (57) Fifty-seventh Judicial District. Nelson.
- (58) Fifty-eighth Judicial District. *Cumberland and Monroe* ~~Marshall~~.
- ~~(59) Fifty-ninth Judicial District. Cumberland and Monroe.~~

➔ Section 8. KRS 24A.050 is amended to read as follows:

The following judicial districts are entitled to two (2) District Judges and shall have two (2) numbered divisions of the District Court:

- (1) Second Judicial District.
- (2) Third Judicial District.
- ~~(3) Fourth Judicial District.~~
- ~~(4)~~ Ninth Judicial District.
- ~~(4)~~~~(5)~~ Eleventh Judicial District.
- ~~(5)~~~~(6)~~ Twelfth Judicial District.

- (6)~~(7)~~ Thirteenth Judicial District.
 (7)~~(8)~~ Fourteenth Judicial District.
~~(9) — Fifteenth Judicial District.~~
 (8)~~(10)~~ Seventeenth Judicial District.
 (9)~~(11)~~ Twenty-first Judicial District.
 (10)~~(12)~~ Twenty-fourth Judicial District.
 (11)~~(13)~~ Twenty-seventh Judicial District.
 (12)~~(14)~~ Twenty-eighth Judicial District.
 (13)~~(15) — Thirty-first Judicial District.~~
 (16)~~(17)~~ Thirty-second Judicial District.
 (14)~~(17)~~ Thirty-fourth Judicial District.
 (15)~~(18)~~ Thirty-fifth Judicial District.
~~(19) — Thirty-eighth Judicial District.~~
~~(20) — Fortieth Judicial District.~~
~~(21) — Forty-first Judicial District.~~
 (16)~~(22)~~ Forty-sixth Judicial District.
 (17)~~(23)~~ Forty-eighth Judicial District.
~~(24) — Fifty-first Judicial District.~~
 (18)~~(25)~~ Fifty-third Judicial District.
 (19)~~(26)~~ Fifty-fourth Judicial District.
 (20)~~(27)~~ Fifty-sixth Judicial District.

→ Section 9. KRS 24A.090 is amended to read as follows:

The Thirtieth Judicial District is entitled to *sixteen* (16)~~(seventeen (17))~~ District Judges and shall have *sixteen* (16)~~(seventeen (17))~~ numbered divisions of the District Court.

→ Section 10. The terms of the new judgeships created by Sections 2, 4, 5, and 6 of this Act shall begin January 2, 2023, and elections to fill the judgeships shall be placed on the ballot for the regular election held in November 2022.

→ Section 11. Notwithstanding KRS 118A.060(2), a candidate for a judgeship created by Section 2, 4, 5, or 6 of this Act may file a petition for nomination not later than the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June preceding the day fixed by law for holding the regular election in November 2022. The petition shall be filed no later than 4 p.m. local time at the place of filing when filed on the last date on which the papers are permitted to be filed. The petition for nomination shall be sworn to by the candidate and by not less than two registered voters from the circuit from which he or she seeks nomination, before an officer authorized to administer an oath. The petition for nomination shall further comply with the provisions of KRS 118A.100(4), and the procedures established under KRS 118A.100(5) to (12) shall apply. All candidates for the judgeships created by Sections 2, 4, 5, and 6 of this Act who file a valid petition for nomination shall be placed on the ballot for the regular election held in November 2022.

→ Section 12. The General Assembly requests that the additional Circuit Court judgeships added in the Third, Sixth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuits be designated by the Supreme Court as family court divisions as provided in Amended Order 2022-09 of the Supreme Court dated February 22, 2022, relating to the Certification of Necessity, and that the certification be delivered to the Secretary of State prior to June 7, 2022, provisions of KRS 118A.045(2) to the contrary notwithstanding.

→ Section 13. (1) The General Assembly requests that the District Court divisions eliminated in the Fourth, Fifteenth, Thirtieth, Thirty-first, Fortieth, Forty-first, and Fifty-first Judicial Districts, and the District Court division eliminated in the newly constituted Thirty-eighth Judicial District and in the newly constituted Forty-second Judicial District be eliminated effective January 1, 2027, except under the circumstances described in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) (a) Should a vacancy occur on or after January 2, 2023, in the Fourth, Fifteenth, Thirty-first, Thirty-eighth, Fortieth, Forty-first, or Fifty-first Judicial District, the numbered division in which the vacancy occurs shall be eliminated immediately upon the occurrence of the vacancy and, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the vacancy shall not be filled by appointment or otherwise, and the division or divisions eliminated shall not appear on the ballot for the November 2026 regular election. If more than one vacancy occurs in any Judicial District listed in this paragraph, only the initial vacancy shall result in the elimination of a division and shall not be filled. Any additional vacancy shall be filled in accordance with KRS 118A.100.

(b) Should a vacancy occur on or after January 2, 2023, in the Thirtieth Judicial District, the numbered division in which the vacancy occurs shall be eliminated immediately upon the occurrence of the vacancy and, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the vacancy shall not be filled by appointment or otherwise, and the division eliminated shall not appear on the ballot for the November 2026 regular election. If more than one vacancy occurs on or after January 2, 2023, in the Thirtieth Judicial District, only the initial vacancy shall result in the elimination of a division and shall not be filled. Any additional vacancy shall be filled in accordance with KRS 118A.100.

➔Section 14. Unless a District Court division has been eliminated by the occurrence of a vacancy in accordance with Section 13 of this Act, the General Assembly requests that when the two District Court divisions of the Fourth, Fifteenth, Thirty-first, Thirty-eighth, Fortieth, Forty-first, and Fifty-first Judicial District are reduced to one District Court division under Section 8 of this Act, the division eliminated shall be the higher-numbered division, and that when the 17 District Court divisions are reduced to 16 District Court divisions in Section 9 of this Act, the division eliminated shall be the highest-numbered division. The divisions that are eliminated shall not appear on the ballot for the November 2026 regular election.

➔Section 15. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this Act take effect January 2, 2023.

➔Section 16. Sections 7, 8, and 9 of this Act take effect January 1, 2031.

➔Section 17. As portions of this Act will impact judicial elections scheduled for November 2022, an emergency is declared to exist, and Sections 11 and 12 of this Act take effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.

Signed by Governor April 8, 2022.