

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 legislative findings; providing that the  
 7           circuit and county court judicial offices created by  
 8           the act constitute vacancies in office for purposes of  
 9           qualifying for the 2018 general election; providing  
 10          for the election of new circuit and county court  
 11          judges created by the act in the 2018 general  
 12          election; providing qualifying dates for these  
 13          positions; specifying elimination dates for the  
 14          decertified offices; providing an effective date.

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

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

20           26.031 Judicial circuits; number of judges.—The number of  
 21 circuit judges in each circuit shall be as follows:

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

24           Section 2. Subsections (1), (5), (8), (11), (16), (28),  
 25 (36), (44), (51), (53), and (54) of section 34.022, Florida

26 Statutes, are amended to read:

27 34.022 Number of county court judges for each county.—The  
 28 number of county court judges in each county shall be as  
 29 follows:

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

43 Section 3. (1) The Legislature finds that an emergency  
 44 does not exist and the public business does not require  
 45 immediate appointment of the circuit and county court judicial  
 46 offices created in sections 1 and 2 of this act.

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

50 (3) The Governor may not fill the circuit and county court

51 judicial offices created in sections 1 and 2 of this act by  
52 appointment, but those offices shall be filled by election in  
53 the 2018 general election pursuant to chapter 105, Florida  
54 Statutes. Candidates for the circuit and county court judicial  
55 offices created in sections 1 and 2 of this act must qualify as  
56 provided in chapter 105, Florida Statutes, except that  
57 candidates qualifying under this act must qualify no earlier  
58 than noon of the 50th day, and no later than noon of the 46th  
59 day, before the primary election.

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

63 (5) The county court judicial offices decertified in  
64 section 2 of this act are eliminated upon the expiration of a  
65 judicial term, as provided in s. 9, Article V of the State  
66 Constitution.

67 (6) If on the same day the number of county court judges  
68 whose terms expire is greater than the number of  
69 decertifications for that county as set forth in this act, the  
70 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall determine which  
71 specific county court judicial offices will be eliminated in  
72 that county subject to judicial decertification.

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