

ADDITION OF CIRCUIT JUDGESHIP IN OTTAWA COUNTY

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House Bill 5259 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Luke Meerman
Committee: Judiciary
Complete to 9-26-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5259 would amend the Revised Judicature Act to authorize the 20th Judicial Circuit, which consists of Ottawa County, to have an additional judge effective January 1, 2023. This would increase the number of judges in the circuit from three to four. If the judgeship were added, the initial term of office would be eight years.

MCL 600.521

BACKGROUND:

According to the State Court Administrative Office, there are 57 circuit courts in Michigan, to which judges are elected for six-year terms. The circuit court is a trial court that handles all civil cases with claims of more than \$25,000 and all felony criminal cases. The family division of circuit court handles all cases regarding divorce, paternity, adoptions, personal protection actions, emancipation of minors, treatment and testing of infectious disease, safe delivery of newborns, name changes, juvenile offenses and delinquency, juvenile guardianship, and child abuse and neglect. In addition, the circuit court hears cases appealed from the other trial courts or from administrative agencies. The friend of the court office is part of the family division of the circuit court and handles domestic relations cases when minor children are involved.¹

FISCAL IMPACT:

Costs for adding one circuit court judgeship and associated personnel would be incurred by the state and the county, respectively. The state pays the salary, the employer portion of FICA taxes, and retirement benefits for circuit court judges. Fringe benefits, personnel costs, and costs for supplies, equipment, and office space are paid for by the local court system. Currently, the cost to the state to add one circuit court judgeship would be \$182,525 annually. Information is not yet available on what the salary amount would be starting January 1, 2023, the effective date of the bill. State costs are funded with roughly 97% state GF/GP revenue. The cost to the local unit for one judgeship is unknown, as local costs for judgeships vary by area.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

¹ <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/courts/trial-courts/>.