

CHAPTER 97-257

House Bill No. 1753

An act relating to the judiciary; amending s. 26.031, F.S.; increasing the number of judges in specified judicial circuits; amending s. 34.022, F.S.; increasing the number of judges in specified county courts; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 26.031, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, is amended to read:

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

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT	TOTAL
(1) First	19
(2) Second	<u>1211</u>
(3) Third	5
(4) Fourth	<u>2928</u>
(5) Fifth	<u>2018</u>
(6) Sixth	37
(7) Seventh	<u>2120</u>
(8) Eighth	10
(9) Ninth	<u>3332</u>
(10) Tenth	18
(11) Eleventh	70
(12) Twelfth	17
(13) Thirteenth	33
(14) Fourteenth	9
(15) Fifteenth	31
(16) Sixteenth	4
(17) Seventeenth	<u>4645</u>
(18) Eighteenth	21
(19) Nineteenth	13
(20) Twentieth	20

Section 2. Section 34.022, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, is amended to read:

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

COUNTY	TOTAL
(1) Alachua	5
(2) Baker	1
(3) Bay	3
(4) Bradford	1
(5) Brevard	7
(6) Broward	<u>2524</u>
(7) Calhoun	1
(8) Charlotte	2
(9) Citrus	1
(10) Clay	2
(11) Collier	3
(12) Columbia	1
(13) Dade	<u>4140</u>
(14) DeSoto	1
(15) Dixie	1
(16) Duval	13
(17) Escambia	5
(18) Flagler	1
(19) Franklin	1
(20) Gadsden	1
(21) Gilchrist	1
(22) Glades	1
(23) Gulf	1
(24) Hamilton	1
(25) Hardee	1
(26) Hendry	1
(27) Hernando	1
(28) Highlands	1
(29) Hillsborough	13
(30) Holmes	1

(31) Indian River 2

(32) Jackson 1

(33) Jefferson 1

(34) Lafayette 1

(35) Lake 2

(36) Lee 6

(37) Leon 4

(38) Levy 1

(39) Liberty 1

(40) Madison 1

(41) Manatee 3

(42) Marion 3

(43) Martin 2

(44) Monroe 4

(45) Nassau 1

(46) Okaloosa 2

(47) Okeechobee 1

(48) Orange 1413

(49) Osceola 3

(50) Palm Beach 17

(51) Pasco 3

(52) Pinellas 13

(53) Polk 6

(54) Putnam 1

(55) St. Johns 2

(56) St. Lucie 3

(57) Santa Rosa 2

(58) Sarasota 4

(59) Seminole 5

(60) Sumter 1

(61) Suwannee 1

(62) Taylor 1

(63) Union 1

(64) Volusia 9

(65) Wakulla 1
 (66) Walton 1
 (67) Washington 1

Section 3. The Office of Program Policy and Governmental Accountability is directed to study, through its staff or by contract with a vendor, the judicial efficiency and cost effectiveness of Florida’s two-tiered trial court system and the jurisdictional distinctions between county and circuit courts. Alternatives, such as full - or part-time magistrates for small claims and civil traffic infractions, changes in jurisdiction, and a unified trial court system, should be included in the study. This study should also include an examination of the state case reporting system currently used by the Florida Supreme Court to determine judicial workload.

(2) The study must be completed and submitted to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice, and the Governor no later than January 31, 1998.

Section 4. The judges filling new offices created by this act shall be appointed by the Governor and shall take office on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January 1998.

Section 5. Sections 1 and 2 of this act shall take effect on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January 1998, and all remaining sections shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Became a law without the Governor’s approval May 30, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 29, 1997.