

By: Senator(s) Norwood

To: Judiciary, Division A;  
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2746

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 9-7-25, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 AUTHORIZE FOUR ADDITIONAL CIRCUIT COURT JUDGESHIPS IN THE SEVENTH  
3 CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT; TO AMEND SECTION 25-31-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE  
4 OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL LEGAL ASSISTANTS IN THE SEVENTH  
5 CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT; TO PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE TO FILL THE  
6 CIRCUIT JUDGESHIPS CREATED IN THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** Section 9-7-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
9 brought forward as follows:

10 9-7-25. (1) There shall be \* \* \* eight (8) circuit judges  
11 for the Seventh Circuit Court District. \* \* \* Two (2) judges  
12 shall be elected from each subdistrict.

13 (2) While there shall be no limitation whatsoever upon the  
14 powers and duties of the said judges other than as cast upon them  
15 by the Constitution and laws of this state, the court in the First  
16 Judicial District of Hinds County, in the discretion of the senior  
17 circuit judge, may be divided into civil and criminal divisions as  
18 a matter of convenience, by the entry of an order upon the minutes  
19 of the court.



**SECTION 2.** Section 25-31-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-31-5. (1) The following number of full-time legal assistants are authorized in the following circuit court districts:

(a) First Circuit Court District..... ten (10) legal assistants.

(b) Second Circuit Court District..... eleven (11) legal assistants.

(c) Third Circuit Court District..... six (6) legal assistants.

(d) Fourth Circuit Court District..... six (6) legal assistants.

(e) Fifth Circuit Court District..... five (5) legal assistants.

(f) Sixth Circuit Court District..... three (3) legal assistants.

(g) Seventh Circuit Court District..... \* \* \* twenty-five (25) legal assistants. \* \* \*

(h) Eighth Circuit Court District..... three (3) legal assistants.

(i) Ninth Circuit Court District..... three (3) legal assistants.

(j) Tenth Circuit Court District..... five (5) legal assistants.



45                   (k)   Eleventh Circuit Court District..... five (5)  
46   legal assistants.  
47                   (l)   Twelfth Circuit Court District..... five (5)  
48   legal assistants.  
49                   (m)   Thirteenth Circuit Court District..... four (4)  
50   legal assistants.  
51                   (n)   Fourteenth Circuit Court District..... six (6)  
52   legal assistants.  
53                   (o)   Fifteenth Circuit Court District..... seven (7)  
54   legal assistants.  
55                   (p)   Sixteenth Circuit Court District..... six (6)  
56   legal assistants.  
57                   (q)   Seventeenth Circuit Court District..... four (4)  
58   legal assistants.  
59                   (r)   Eighteenth Circuit Court District..... two (2)  
60   legal assistants.  
61                   (s)   Nineteenth Circuit Court District..... seven (7)  
62   legal assistants.  
63                   (t)   Twentieth Circuit Court District..... seven (7)  
64   legal assistants.  
65                   (u)   Twenty-first Circuit Court District..... four (4)  
66   legal assistants.  
67                   (v)   Twenty-second Circuit Court District..... three (3)  
68   legal assistants.



69                   (w) Twenty-third Circuit Court District ..... five (5)  
70 legal assistants.

71           (2) In addition to any legal assistants authorized pursuant  
72 to subsection (1) of this section, the following number of  
73 full-time legal assistants are authorized (i) in the following  
74 circuit court districts if funds are appropriated by the  
75 Legislature to adequately fund the salaries, expenses and fringe  
76 benefits of such legal assistants, or (ii) in any of the following  
77 circuit court districts in which the board of supervisors of one  
78 or more of the counties in a circuit court district adopts a  
79 resolution to pay all of the salaries, supplemental pay, expenses  
80 and fringe benefits of legal assistants authorized in such  
81 district pursuant to this subsection:

82                   (a) First Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
83 legal assistants.

84                   (b) Second Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
85 legal assistants.

86                   (c) Third Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
87 legal assistants.

88                   (d) Fourth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
89 legal assistants.

90                   (e) Fifth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
91 legal assistants.

92                   (f) Sixth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
93 legal assistants.



94                   (g) Seventh Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
95 legal assistants.  
96                   (h) Eighth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
97 legal assistants.  
98                   (i) Ninth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
99 legal assistants.  
100                  (j) Tenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
101 legal assistants.  
102                  (k) Eleventh Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
103 legal assistants.  
104                  (l) Twelfth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
105 legal assistants.  
106                  (m) Thirteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
107 legal assistants.  
108                  (n) Fourteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
109 legal assistants.  
110                  (o) Fifteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
111 legal assistants.  
112                  (p) Sixteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
113 legal assistants.  
114                  (q) Seventeenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
115 legal assistants.  
116                  (r) Eighteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
117 legal assistants.



118           (s) Nineteenth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
119 legal assistants.

120           (t) Twentieth Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
121 legal assistants.

122           (u) Twenty-first Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
123 legal assistants.

124           (v) Twenty-second Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
125 legal assistants.

126           (w) Twenty-third Circuit Court District.....two (2)  
127 legal assistants.

128           (3) The board of supervisors of any county may pay all or a  
129 part of the salary, supplemental pay, expenses and fringe benefits  
130 of any district attorney or legal assistant authorized in the  
131 circuit court district to which such county belongs pursuant to  
132 this section.

133           (4) The district attorney of any circuit court district may  
134 employ additional legal assistants or criminal investigators, or  
135 both, without regard to any limitation on the number of legal  
136 assistants authorized in this section or criminal investigators  
137 authorized by other provisions of law to the extent that the  
138 district attorney's office receives funds from any source. Any  
139 source shall include, but is not limited to, office generated  
140 funds, funds from a county, a combination of counties, a  
141 municipality, a combination of municipalities, federal funds,  
142 private grants or foundations, or by means of an Interlocal



Cooperative Agreement authorized by Section 17-13-1 which may be expended for those positions in an amount sufficient to pay all of the salary, supplemental pay, expenses and fringe benefits of the positions. Such funds may either be paid out of district attorney accounts, transferred by the district attorney to the Department of Finance and Administration or to one or more of the separate counties comprising the circuit court district, and the funds shall be disbursed to such employees in the same manner as state-funded criminal investigators and full-time legal assistants. The district attorney shall report to the board of supervisors of each county comprising the circuit court district the amount and source of the supplemental salary, expenses and fringe benefits, and the board in each county shall spread the same on its minutes. The district attorney shall also report such information to the Department of Finance and Administration which shall make such information available to the Legislative Budget Office.

(5) The district attorney shall be authorized to assign the duties of a legal assistant regardless of the source of funding for such legal assistants.

**SECTION 3.** Candidates for the circuit judgeships created by this act shall run for those offices in a special election to be conducted in conjunction with the general election of November 2024. Candidates shall file the intent to be a candidate not later than 5:00 p.m. on June 1, 2024, and otherwise shall qualify



168 as provided by Section 23-15-977, and shall run for office and be  
169 elected as provided in Sections 23-15-974 through 23-15-985 which  
170 is the Nonpartisan Judicial Election Act. The judges elected  
171 shall serve a two-year term to begin January 1, 2025, and the  
172 terms of those offices shall thereafter be as is provided for  
173 chancellors and circuit judges generally.

174       **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
175 and after July 1, 2024.

