
By: Senators Blount, Young, Pica, McFadden, Stone, and Sfikas

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 1996

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Judges - Baltimore City Circuit Court**

3 FOR the purpose of increasing the number of resident judges of the Circuit Court for
4 Baltimore City.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
6 Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings
7 Section 1-503
8 Annotated Code of Maryland
9 (1995 Replacement Volume and 1995 Supplement)

10 Preamble

11 WHEREAS, The Circuit Court for Baltimore City has assumed the responsibility
12 of trying all asbestos-related personal injury cases filed in the State of Maryland;

13 WHEREAS, More than 12,000 of these cases are awaiting trial in the Baltimore
14 City Circuit Court, the majority of which were filed more than five years ago; and

15 WHEREAS, Since 1982, less than 300 asbestos-related cases have been resolved
16 by a trial in Maryland, while more than 158,000 nonasbestos tort claims have been cleared
17 from Maryland courts and a total of 1.4 million civil actions in Maryland have been
18 terminated between 1980 and 1994; and

19 WHEREAS, Article 19 of the Declaration of Rights of the Maryland Constitution
20 guarantees that every citizen, "for any injury done to him in his person, ought to have
21 remedy by the course of the Law of the land, and ought to have justice and right, freely
22 without sale, fully without any denial, and speedily without any delay, according to the
23 Law of the land"; and

24 WHEREAS, More than one half of the violent crimes in Maryland occur in
25 Baltimore City; and

26 WHEREAS, The felony docket in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City has
27 experienced a 36% increase since January 1, 1995; and

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1 WHEREAS, The judicial resources of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City are
2 simply inadequate to ensure compliance with the provisions of Article 19 of the Maryland
3 Declaration of Rights; now, therefore,

4 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
5 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

6 **Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

7 1-503.

8 (a) In each county in the first seven judicial circuits there shall be the number of
9 resident judges of the circuit court set forth below, including the judge or judges provided
10 for by the Constitution:

- 11 (1) Allegany..... 2
- 12 (2) Anne Arundel..... 9
- 13 (3) Baltimore County..... 15
- 14 (4) Calvert..... 2
- 15 (5) Caroline..... 1
- 16 (6) Carroll..... 3
- 17 (7) Charles..... 4
- 18 (8) Cecil..... 3
- 19 (9) Dorchester..... 1
- 20 (10) Frederick..... 4
- 21 (11) Garrett..... 1
- 22 (12) Harford..... 5
- 23 (13) Howard..... 5
- 24 (14) Kent..... 1
- 25 (15) Montgomery..... 16
- 26 (16) Prince George's..... 20
- 27 (17) Queen Anne's..... 1
- 28 (18) St. Mary's..... 2
- 29 (19) Somerset..... 1
- 30 (20) Talbot..... 1
- 31 (21) Washington..... 4

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1 (23) Worcester..... 2

2 (b) In Baltimore City there shall be [26] 30 resident judges of the Circuit Court
3 for Baltimore City.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
5 October 1, 1996.