
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

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 29, 1996

CHAPTER ____

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; and providing for the effective date of this Act.

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)

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11 Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings
12 Section 1-503
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (1995 Replacement Volume and 1995 Supplement)
15 (As enacted by Section 1 of this Act)

16 **Preamble**

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

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

21 ~~WHEREAS, Since 1982, less than 300 asbestos-related cases have been resolved~~
22 ~~by a trial in Maryland, while more than 158,000 nonasbestos tort claims have been cleared~~

1 from Maryland courts and a total of 1.4 million civil actions in Maryland have been
2 terminated between 1980 and 1994; and

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

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

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

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

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

17 **Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

18 1-503.

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

- 22 (1) Allegany..... 2
- 23 (2) Anne Arundel..... 9
- 24 (3) Baltimore County..... 15
- 25 (4) Calvert..... 2
- 26 (5) Caroline..... 1
- 27 (6) Carroll..... 3
- 28 (7) Charles..... 4
- 29 (8) Cecil..... 3
- 30 (9) Dorchester..... 1
- 31 (10) Frederick..... 4
- 32 (11) Garrett..... 1
- 33 (12) Harford..... 5
- 34 (13) Howard..... 5

3

1 (14) Kent..... 1

2 (15) Montgomery..... 16

3 (16) Prince George's..... 20

4 (17) Queen Anne's..... 1

5 (18) St. Mary's..... 2

6 (19) Somerset..... 1

7 (20) Talbot..... 1

8 (21) Washington..... 4

9 (22) Wicomico..... 3

10 (23) Worcester..... 2

11 (b) In Baltimore City there shall be [26] ~~30~~ 28 resident judges of the Circuit
12 Court for Baltimore City.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland
14 read as follows:

15 **Article - Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

16 1-503.

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

20 (1) Allegany..... 2

21 (2) Anne Arundel..... 9

22 (3) Baltimore County..... 15

23 (4) Calvert..... 2

24 (5) Caroline..... 1

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27 (8) Cecil..... 3

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29 (10) Frederick..... 4

30 (11) Garrett..... 1

31 (12) Harford..... 5

4

1 (13) Howard..... 5
2 (14) Kent..... 1
3 (15) Montgomery..... 16
4 (16) Prince George's..... 20
5 (17) Queen Anne's..... 1
6 (18) St. Mary's..... 2
7 (19) Somerset..... 1
8 (20) Talbot..... 1
9 (21) Washington..... 4
10 (22) Wicomico..... 3
11 (23) Worcester..... 2

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

14 SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 1 of this Act
15 shall take effect October 1, 1996.

16 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 2 of this Act
17 shall take effect July 1, 1997.