

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 305 (The Speaker) (Judiciary)

Judiciary

Referred to Judicial Proceedings & Budget & Taxation

Judgeships - Trial Courts

This amended bill increases the number of circuit court judges by adding one additional judge to the judicial circuits of Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties effective July 1, 1997, and by adding one additional judge to the Baltimore County circuit effective January 1, 1998. In addition, the bill increases the number of District Court Judges by adding one judge each for District 5 and District 8 effective July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures would increase by \$733,000 in FY 1998, increasing in future years due to annualization and inflation. The proposed FY 1998 budget includes funds for these costs, though the funds are not contingent upon enactment of this legislation.

(in dollars)	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	733,000	996,000	997,100	997,900	998,800
Net Effect	\$733,000	\$996,000	\$997,100	\$997,900	\$998,800

Note: ( ) - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

**Local Effect:** Local expenditures would increase in FY 1998 by \$33,900 for Baltimore County, \$116,000 for Prince George’s County, \$74,600 for Anne Arundel County, and by an indeterminate amount for Montgomery County as discussed below. Future year increases would reflect annual salary adjustments and inflation. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None. This bill would not directly affect small businesses.

## Fiscal Analysis

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures would increase by an estimated \$732,936 in fiscal 1998, which reflects the bill's various effective dates. The January 1, 1998 effective date for the start-up of the additional Baltimore County Circuit Court Judge has been adjusted to reflect the anticipated March 1, 1998 conclusion of capital construction already underway providing the courtroom and space for that judgeship. This estimate reflects the cost of appointing three circuit judges and two District Court Judges by October 1, 1997, one Circuit Court Judge by March 1, 1998, and the cost of hiring four Circuit Court Clerks, two District Court Clerks, and two District Court Bailiffs. The estimate includes salaries of \$461,524 and total fringe benefits of \$271,436.

Judicial Salaries	\$375,040
Fringe Benefits	216,379
Other Salaries	97,184
Fringe Benefits	<u>44,333</u>

**Total FY 1998 State Expenditures** **\$732,936**

Future year expenditures reflect (1) full salaries with 3.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover for the non-judicial positions. Judicial salary increases are not included because they are determined by the Judicial Compensation Commission and the General Assembly. This estimate is based on current salaries of \$96,500 per year for each Circuit Court Judge, and \$89,200 per year for each District Court Judge.

It should be noted that a resolution has been introduced by the Judicial Compensation Commission (SJ3/HJ6) that would increase judicial salaries by a proposed \$9,000 per year for circuit court and District Court Judges.

**Local Expenditures:** The counties provide support staff and supplies for the circuit courts as well as all capital and operating expenses for courtrooms. Each judge has a Law Clerk and a Secretary, but attendant operating costs will vary.

Prince George's County estimates that the costs of these salaries and supporting operating expenditures will be \$116,192 in fiscal 1998, which reflects the October 1, 1997 effective date. In future years, these costs would be adjusted for annualization, inflation, and the deduction of one-time expenses occurring in fiscal 1998 only. Similar expenditures for Anne Arundel County in fiscal 1998 are estimated to be \$74,630.

The bill provides that in Baltimore County an additional Circuit Court Judge is added effective January 1, 1998. However, the county reports that the capital construction of

courtroom and office facilities for that judgeship will not be complete for occupancy and operations until approximately March 1, 1998. Support costs for the county reflect that date as the actual effective date for this bill. Accordingly, Baltimore County expenditures for fiscal 1998 are estimated to be \$33,890. Future years would reflect adjustments cited above.

**Montgomery County failed to respond to our request for information.** It is assumed, however, that the county would have costs similar to the other counties reflecting support staff and operating expenses for an additional Circuit Court Judge. Absent an estimate from the county, those costs cannot be reliably quantified at this time.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 5, 1997  
brd Revised - House Third Reader - March 24, 1997

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