

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 493

(Chair, Judiciary Committee)(By Request - Maryland
 Judicial Conference)

Judiciary

Judicial Proceedings

Washington County - Judgeships - District Court

This bill creates one additional District Court judgeship in District 11 to be appointed from Washington County.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$423,500 in FY 2027 for one additional judge and associated staff; future year expenditures reflect annualization, inflation, and planned salary increases for judges, as discussed below. The FY 2027 budget as passed by the General Assembly includes funding for this purpose. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	423,500	525,900	543,600	561,800	571,800
Net Effect	(\$423,500)	(\$525,900)	(\$543,600)	(\$561,800)	(\$571,800)

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

Local Effect: The bill does not affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: For purposes of the operation and administration of the District Court, the State is divided into 12 districts. District 11, which has five judges, includes Frederick and Washington counties. Of these judges, three are from Frederick County and two are from Washington County.

To support the General Assembly’s role in establishing new judgeships, the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of Maryland annually certifies to the General Assembly the need for additional judges in the State. The Judiciary uses best practices developed by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to calculate judicial need, which take into account the amount of judicial work generated on average per case filing within each distinct case type. Using the model developed by NCSC, judicial need for fiscal 2027 was primarily based on the average and type of new case filings in the most recent three years (fiscal 2023 through 2025). The certification of judicial workloads indicates a projected need of five additional judges throughout the State, including one additional judge for the District Court location in Washington County. Additional District Court judgeships were last created by Chapter 749 of 2019, which added one District Court judge each in St. Mary’s County and Anne Arundel County, and two District Court judges each in Prince George’s County and Baltimore County, for a total of six District Court judges.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$423,537 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of creating one new District Court judgeship and the associated positions of one courtroom clerk and two contractual bailiffs (a total of four positions, including two contractual employees). The estimate includes salaries and fringe benefits, as well as operating expenses for the District Court. The fiscal 2027 budget as introduced includes funding for these positions.

Positions	2.0
Contractual Positions	2.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$386,974
Operating Expenses	<u>36,563</u>
Total FY 2027 State Expenditures	\$423,537

Future year expenditures generally reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover. This estimate also reflects specific increases in the salary of the District Court judge through fiscal 2030, as implemented by Joint Resolutions 2 and 4 of 2026 (Judicial Compensation Commission – Recommendations). Because the Judicial Compensation Commission may make additional recommendations (in future years) for consideration by the General Assembly, the fiscal 2031 estimate does not reflect any additional increase in the salary for the District Court judge beyond that in fiscal 2030.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 543 (Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee)(By Request - Maryland Judicial Conference) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 17, 2026
caw/jkb Third Reader - March 23, 2026
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Revised - Updated Information - May 8, 2026
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