**South Carolina General Assembly**

123rd Session, 2019-2020

**H. 4974**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. Lucas, Simrill, Rutherford, Pope, McCoy, G.M. Smith, Bannister, Hart, B. Newton, Bales, Forrest, Henderson‑Myers, Weeks, Fry, Hixon and Govan

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Introduced in the House on January 21, 2020

Introduced in the Senate on February 19, 2020

Last Amended on February 13, 2020

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Judiciary**

Summary: Circuit court judges; divisions; increase number of at-large circuit court judges to 17

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

1/21/2020 House Introduced and read first time ([House Journal‑page 6](file:///h:\hj\20200121.docx))

1/21/2020 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** ([House Journal‑page 6](file:///h:\hj\20200121.docx))

2/5/2020 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Judiciary** ([House Journal‑page 42](file:///h:\hj\20200205.docx))

2/11/2020 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Hart

2/11/2020 House Debate adjourned until Wed., 2‑12‑20 ([House Journal‑page 12](file:///h:\hj\20200211.docx))

2/12/2020 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: B.Newton, Bales, Forrest, Henderson‑Myers, Weeks

2/12/2020 House Debate adjourned until Thur., 2‑13‑20 ([House Journal‑page 30](file:///h:\hj\20200212.docx))

2/13/2020 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Fry, Hixon, Govan

2/13/2020 House Amended ([House Journal‑page 6](file:///h:\hj\20200213.docx))

2/13/2020 House Read second time ([House Journal‑page 6](file:///h:\hj\20200213.docx))

2/13/2020 House Roll call Yeas‑105 Nays‑5 ([House Journal‑page 8](file:///h:\hj\20200213.docx))

2/18/2020 Scrivener's error corrected

2/18/2020 House Read third time and sent to Senate ([House Journal‑page 6](file:///h:\hj\20200218.docx))

2/19/2020 Senate Introduced and read first time ([Senate Journal‑page 9](file:///h:\sj\20200219.docx))

2/19/2020 Senate Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** ([Senate Journal‑page 9](file:///h:\sj\20200219.docx))

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[1/21/2020](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\4974_20200121.docx)

[2/5/2020](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\4974_20200205.docx)

[2/13/2020](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\4974_20200213.docx)

[2/18/2020](file:///p:\pprever\2019-20\4974_20200218.docx)

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

AMENDED

February 13, 2020

**H. 4974**

Introduced by Reps. Lucas, Simrill, Rutherford, Pope, McCoy, G.M. Smith, Bannister, Hart, B. Newton, Bales, Forrest, Henderson‑Myers, Weeks, Fry, Hixon and Govan

S. Printed 2/13/20--H. [SEC 2/18/20 11:07 AM]

Read the first time January 21, 2020.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 14‑5‑610, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE DIVISION OF THE STATE INTO SIXTEEN JUDICIAL CIRCUITS AND ADDITIONAL AT‑LARGE JUDGES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AT‑LARGE CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES FROM SIXTEEN TO SEVENTEEN; AND TO AMEND SECTION 63‑3‑40, RELATING TO FAMILY COURT JUDGES ELECTED FROM EACH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AND ADDITIONAL AT‑LARGE JUDGES, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AT‑LARGE FAMILY COURT JUDGES FROM EIGHT TO TEN.

Amend Title To Conform

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 14‑5‑610(B) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(B) One judge must be elected from the second, sixth, and twelfth circuits. Two judges must be elected from the first, third, fourth, seventh, eighth, tenth, eleventh, ~~fourteenth, fifteenth,~~ and sixteenth circuits. Three judges must be elected from the fifth ~~and~~, ninth, fourteenth, and fifteenth circuits. Four judges must be elected from the thirteenth circuit.”

SECTION 2. Section 63‑3‑40(A) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) The General Assembly shall elect a number of family court judges from each judicial circuit as follows:

First Circuit ~~Three~~ Four Judges

Second Circuit Two Judges

Third Circuit Three Judges

Fourth Circuit Three Judges

Fifth Circuit Four Judges

Sixth Circuit Two Judges

Seventh Circuit Three Judges

Eighth Circuit Three Judges

Ninth Circuit Six Judges

Tenth Circuit Three Judges

Eleventh Circuit Three Judges

Twelfth Circuit Three Judges

Thirteenth Circuit Six Judges

Fourteenth Circuit Three Judges

Fifteenth Circuit Three Judges

Sixteenth Circuit ~~Two~~ Three Judges.”

SECTION 3. The Judicial Merit Selection Commission shall begin the process of nominating candidates for the judicial offices authorized by the provisions of SECTIONS 1 and 2, except that the additional judicial office in SECTION 1 added in the fourteenth judicial circuit is not effective until July 1, 2022. The General Assembly then shall elect these judges from the nominees of the commission; except that, the nominating process may not begin until funding for the additional judges is provided in the general appropriations act.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval of the Governor.

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