**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, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES BY ONE IN THE NINTH, FOURTEENTH, AND FIFTEENTH CIRCUITS; AND TO AMEND SECTION 63‑3‑40, RELATING TO FAMILY COURT JUDGES ELECTED FROM EACH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SO AS TO INCREASE BY ONE THE NUMBER OF FAMILY COURT JUDGES IN THE FIRST AND SIXTEENTH CIRCUITS.

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 ninth and 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. 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 by the Governor.

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