

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
KARL R. MADE

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY &
LEGAL COUNSEL
EDWARD M. MACON

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EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
CAROLINE E. KIRKPATRICK, DIRECTOR

FISCAL SERVICES
JOHN B. RICKMAN, DIRECTOR

SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
100 NORTH NINTH STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2334
(804) 786-6455

HUMAN RESOURCES
RENÉE FLEMING MILLS, DIRECTOR

JUDICIAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
ROBERT L. SMITH, DIRECTOR

JUDICIAL PLANNING
CYRIL W. MILLER, JR., DIRECTOR

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LEGAL RESEARCH
STEVEN L. DALLE MURA, DIRECTOR

LEGISLATIVE & PUBLIC RELATIONS
KATYA N. HERNDON, DIRECTOR

December 20, 2013

The Honorable David B. Albo
Chairman, House Courts of Justice Committee
6367 Rolling Mill Place, Suite 102
Springfield, VA 22152

The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Courts of Justice Committee
P.O. Box 6205
Williamsburg, Virginia 23188

Dear Chairmen:

Virginia Code § 17.1-507 provides that the Judicial Council shall make a study and report to the Courts of Justice Committees of the House of Delegates and Senate on the number of new circuit court judgeships needed and the circuits for which they should be authorized.

As you are aware, Chapter 601, Virginia Acts of Assembly (2012), directed the Supreme Court of Virginia to "develop and implement a weighted caseload system to precisely measure and compare judicial caseloads throughout the Commonwealth on the circuit court, general district court, and juvenile and domestic relations district court levels." In response to the legislation, the Supreme Court of Virginia's Office of the Executive Secretary contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to develop a weighted caseload system for Virginia's trial courts. In light of the detailed study conducted by the National Center for State Courts, the Judicial Council did not conduct a study regarding the need for new circuit court judgeships this year. On December 2, The Executive Committee of the Judicial Council adopted the National Center for State Courts' report and recommendations.

In the *Virginia Judicial Workload Assessment Report*, the National Center for State Courts recommended that the General Assembly consider filling judicial vacancies and, in some cases, creating new judicial positions, in circuits where the weighted caseload model shows a need for additional judicial resources. Based on the *Virginia Judicial Workload Assessment Report*, the Judicial Council recommends the authorization of 20 new circuit court judgeships (one each in the Sixth, Seventh, Tenth, Twelfth, Sixteenth, Eighteenth, Twenty-second, Twenty-fifth, Twenty-eighth, Twenty-ninth, Thirtieth, and Thirty-first Judicial Circuits; two each in the Fifteenth and Twenty-seventh Judicial Circuits; and three additional judgeships in the Twenty-sixth Judicial Circuit). Additionally, the weighted caseload study reveals that seven judgeships currently authorized are not supported by the caseload in the circuits for which they are authorized (one each in the Second, Third, Fourth, Eighth, Seventeenth, Twenty-first, and Twenty-third Judicial Circuits). Six of these authorized judgeships (in the Second, Third, Fourth, Eighth, Seventeenth, and Twenty-third Judicial Circuits) can be reallocated if a current/announced judicial vacancy is left unfilled in each of these circuits.

Please find enclosed Exhibit 11 from the NCSC report, which outlines the "Summary of Judicial Need and Availability" for the circuit courts, a list of current and announced circuit court vacancies, as of December 17, 2013, and a statement showing the cost for the creation of a new circuit court judgeship. In accordance with Item 40, Paragraph D of the Appropriations act, Chapter 806, 2013 Virginia Acts of Assembly, the cost for the creation of each new circuit court judgeship will be \$284,047.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes, I am

Very truly yours,



Karl R. Hade

KRH:jrp
Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Susan C. Schaar, Clerk
The Honorable G. Paul Nardo, Clerk
Mr. Richard E. Hickman, Jr., Senate Finance
Mr. Michael Jay, House Appropriations
Ms. Mary Kate Felch, Legislative Services

Exhibit 11: Circuit Court - Summary of Judicial Need and Availability

Circuit	Implied Need (FTE)	Implied Need w/ chief (FTE)	Implied Need with EPM Rounding (FTE)	Total Authorized Judges	Judicial Need*
1	4.5	4.6	5	5	
2	8.6	8.7	9	10	- 1
3	4.2	4.3	4	5	- 1
4	8.2	8.3	8	9	- 1
5	3.1	3.2	3	3	
6	2.6	2.7	3	2	1
7	6.3	6.4	6	5	1
8	2.7	2.8	3	4	- 1
9	3.9	4.0	4	4	
10	4.1	4.2	4	3	1
11	2.7	2.8	3	3	
12	5.8	5.9	6	5	1
13	7.5	7.6	8	8	
14	4.8	4.9	5	5	
15	11.0	11.1	11	9**	2
16	5.4	5.5	6	5	1
17	2.7	2.8	3	4	- 1
18	4.1	4.2	4	3	1
19	14.5	14.6	15	15	
20	4.6	4.7	5	4	1
21	2.4	2.5	2	3	- 1
22	4.7	4.8	5	4	1
23	5.4	5.5	5	6	- 1
24	5.0	5.1	5	5	
25	5.1	5.2	5	4	1
26	7.5	7.6	8	5	3
27	6.9	7.0	7	5	2
28	3.5	3.6	4	3	1
29	5.2	5.3	5	4	1
30	3.7	3.8	4	3	1
31	5.7	5.8	6	5	1
	166.4	169.5	171	158	13

*A positive number indicates additional judicial need beyond the number of current authorized judges

**Effective July 1, 2013, the number of authorized circuit court judgeships in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit was increased by one bringing the total authorized judgeships to nine.

Circuit Court - Current/Announced Judicial Vacancies as of 12/17/13

Circuit	Authorized Judgeships	NCSC Recommendation	Current or Announced Vacancy
1	5	5	
2	10	9	1
3	5	4	2
4	9	8	3
5	3	3	1
6	2	3	
7	5	6	1
8	4	3	1
9	4	4	1
10	3	4	
11	3	3	1
12	5	6	2
13	8	8	2
14	5	5	
15	9	11	1
16	5	6	1
17	4	3	1
18	3	4	
19	15	15	2
20	4	5	1
21	3	2	
22	4	5	
23	6	5	1
24	5	5	1
25	4	5	
26	5	8	
27	5	7	
28	3	4	
29	4	5	
30	3	4	
31	5	6	
	158	171	23

New Circuit Court Judgeship Costs

2014-16 Biennium

				Circuit Court
Salary (July 25, 2013)			\$	162,878
VRS Rate*		51.66%		84,143
Group Life *		1.32%		2,150
Retire Health Ins.*		1.17%		1,906
FICA Base	\$113,700	7.65%		8,698
FICA (above cap)	(\$113,700)	1.45%		713
Health Ins. (family plan - 2013-14 fiscal year)				15,852
Deferred Comp Match				480
Office Expenses/ Clerk Hire				1,500
Substitute Judges (Avg expense per judge)				5,727
Total			\$	284,047
* Rates based on VRS Board recommended rates for the 2014-16 biennium.				

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16	5	6	1
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18	3	4	
19	15	15	2
20	4	5	1
21	3	2	
22	4	5	
23	6	5	1
24	5	5	1
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