



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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## BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 525 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Rick Jones  
Committee: Judiciary

**CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Revised Judicature Act to do the following:

- Eliminate a circuit court judgeship in Saginaw County; retain a circuit court judgeship in Clinton and Gratiot Counties; authorize one additional circuit court judgeship in Livingston County; and eliminate three district court judgeships.
- Eliminate language prohibiting certain probate judges from engaging in the practice of law, and, instead, allow only a probate judge who is not a judge of the First Probate Court District to practice law.
- Extend the authorization for the consolidation of the 18<sup>th</sup> (Westland) and 29<sup>th</sup> (Wayne) Judicial Districts to January 1, 2020.
- Authorize the consolidation of the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts if the governing bodies of those cities (Eastpointe, Roseville, and Fraser) approved of the consolidation before January 1, 2020.
- Require the question of creating the First Probate Court District to be submitted to the electors of the affected counties (Houghton and Keweenaw) and, if the voters did not approve the probate district, authorize the probate judges in those counties and Baraga County to act as district judges upon the elimination of a district judgeship.

MCL 600.511 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have a positive fiscal impact on the State and local units of government.

According to the July 2017 Judicial Resources Recommendations report, each circuit and probate court judgeship has a cost to the State of \$161,146, and each district court judgeship has a cost to the State of \$159,342. These costs include salary, retirement contributions up to 7%, and the employer share of FICA taxes (OASI and Medicare). The local court system pays for the remaining judgeship costs, including fringe benefits, facility costs, and overhead. The costs for circuit, district, and probate courts differ by location.

The full implementation of the bill would mean either a net reduction of four district court judges, or a net reduction of three district court judges and one-half probate court judge (as the Keweenaw County probate court judgeship is considered part-time and State law permits the judge to practice law), depending on the choice Houghton and Keweenaw County voters made in the November 2018 general election. The savings to the State would be between \$558,000 and \$637,000 per year. This analysis assumes no additional cost for the retained circuit court judgeship or the retained district court judgeship. To the extent that local courts were able to reduce staff or equipment costs, they would realize savings.

Date Completed: 9-29-17

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan

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Bill Analysis @ [www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa)

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